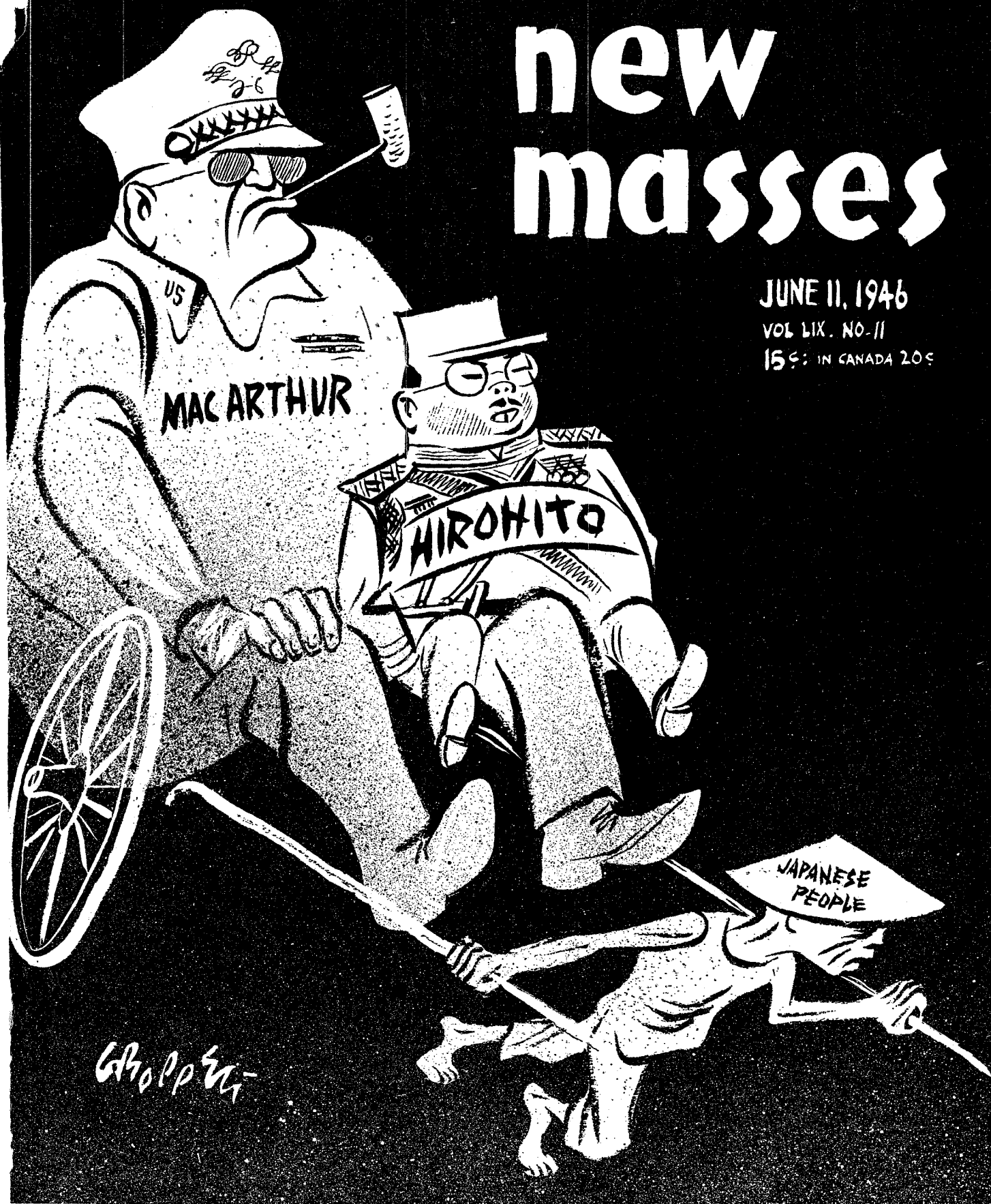




WHO RIGGED CANADA'S "SPY SCARE"?

AN ON-THE-SPOT REPORT FROM MONTREAL BY JOSEPH NORTH

A Scene from "ON WHITMAN AVENUE"

just a minute



FOR six hours it was black Wednesday in NM's office. We were in the midst of work on this issue, our minds intent on doing everything we could in the great nationwide battle rolling up against the Truman forced labor bill. There was an editorial to be written, manuscripts to be edited and sent to the printer, cartoons to be planned, letters to be dictated, and a thousand and one details that go into the making of the magazine to be looked after. And that morning all of us had been elated by a wire from Joe North that he was sending us an article from Montreal. Then Paul Kaye, who had just taken over the world's most difficult job, business manager of NEW MASSES, dropped a bombshell into our midst.

"We've got to pay the printer \$1,500 by Friday noon," Paul said, "or we can't go to press."

Now our printer isn't an unreasonable fellow at all. He doesn't spend his days dreaming up ways of making it tough for your magazine. In fact, he's been most generous with credit. But there's a limit—and he has his bills to pay too. Perhaps you think \$1,500 isn't such a tremendous sum. But for NM at that moment it might as well have been \$1,000,000. We didn't have it and saw no possibility of getting anything approaching \$1,500 through normal sources.

The fact is we're in a hole financially—

and a rather large-sized hole at that. We get letters in the mail every day telling us how much the magazine has improved in recent weeks, but what we don't get in the mail or in any other way is enough money to enable us to keep moving forward, to keep living at all. As a result, of the rock-bottom \$50,000 to meet our deficit we asked our readers for at the beginning of the year, only \$15,938 has so far come in. At this rate, by the end of the year we will have only about \$34,700. And as you see, our creditors won't wait till the end of the year.

Well, what did we do that black Wednesday? The editors dropped their editorial duties and together with Paul Kaye, Beatrice Siskind and others of our business staff, began calling various friends of NM in an effort to borrow the \$1,500. Some of these friends had already left town for the Memorial Day holiday, so we had to keep at it the greater part of the day. But we finally raised the money, pledging that you, our readers, would repay these loans.

There wasn't time to ask you whether we could make that pledge in your name. All we had to go by was the fact that for twelve years, ever since NM became a weekly, you have never let us down. Rather, you have never let yourselves down, because this magazine, the only Marxist cul-

tural-political weekly in the country, belongs to its readers. And it is on you that we depend not only to repay the \$1,500 we borrowed to enable this issue to appear, but the many thousands more we must have in the immediate future.

The situation remains critical. We appeal to you—give house parties, give lawn parties, put the touch on your friends, send us the biggest bill you've got in your wallet. Do it today.

A. B. M.

PAUL KAYE, who with this issue becomes heir to NM's financial headaches, comes to us after two years with the Army Air Force. Prior to that he was an organizer for the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Technicians and Chemists-CIO, which recently merged with the United Office and Professional Workers of America. Mr. Kaye succeeds Lottie Gordon, who after two years of yeoman efforts is taking a badly needed "rest" as a full-time mother.

NOTE to Michigan and Ohio readers: A. B. Magil will speak in Detroit June 13, in Cleveland June 15, Akron June 16, Columbus June 17 and Dayton June 18. In Detroit he will take part in an "Art As a Weapon" symposium. The Ohio meetings have been arranged in connection with a special campaign to distribute his recent pamphlet, "Socialism: What's in It for You."

CORRECTION: Last week's cover was erroneously credited to Shimon. It was actually the work of Symeon Shimin.

B. M.

new masses

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WHO RIGGED CANADA'S "SPY SCARE"?

World peace stands in the dock in a Montreal court. An on-the-scene report from our editor at the trial of Fred Rose, Labor-Progressive M.P.

By JOSEPH NORTH

Montreal (by mail)

"It is strictly forbidden to blaspheme in this tavern"—sign in Montreal bar.

I KEEP thinking of that regulation as I sit here, in Montreal's imposing Criminal Court—and I do not blaspheme. But I have heard more blasphemy, albeit decorous and sonorously legal, than I ever wish to hear again. I have heard men swearing on Bibles blaspheme against everything that two billion men, women and children hold most sacred in life—peace.

I am at the conspiracy trial of Fred Rose, Labor-Progressive M.P. from Montreal. Ivor Gouzenko, the Russian traitor, is on the stand. The two-bit Judas is going great guns. He has been expertly coached, almost overtrained for the bout. He stands there, pale; the Crown's attorney solicitously asks a chair for the star witness. Ivor has been under doctor's observation, the prosecutor says sympathetically. He tosses the witness heavy cues and Mr. Gouzenko nabs them adroitly. "And the Embassy had a secret room?" "Yes, the Embassy had a secret room." "And your job was to decode secret messages?" "Yes, my job was to decode secret messages." Thus for hours. Mr. Gouzenko has won the hearts of the war-hungry press here for his unalterable idealism, and is described as a sort of cross between Gary Cooper and St. George. "I did it because I came to love democracy which I discovered in Canada." His discovery of democracy was preceded by a little burglary of the till in the Soviet offices where he worked as a cipher clerk, but nobody makes much of that.

Mr. Gouzenko's love for Canadian democratic procedures is all-consuming, most understanding. Minor digressions from the Magna Carta fail to disturb him. He does not take into account routine derelictions such as occur in this courtroom, and recently elsewhere in Canada. I do not know if he noticed the fact that every Jew on the panel of about 100, from which the jury was chosen, was excluded. In

fact, none of the Canadian democracy-loving journals seemed to bother much about it. *La Patrie*, a French-Canadian journal, described what happened without editorial comment. "*Ceux qu'on Refusait*" the caption read over the paragraph which said, in effect, that the prosecution, represented by Messieurs Oscar Gagnon, K.C., the Hon. Philippe Brais, K.C., and William Meredith, K.C., peremptorily rejected more than a dozen "who were not even permitted to advance to the tribunal." They responded to the names, *La Patrie* said, of MM. L. Shapiro, D. Miller, P. Weber, I. Rabinovitch, T. Adler, Jacob Goldwasser, George Salomon, A. Rabinovitch, John F. Fishblock, Elie Screger, etc.

I watched the quaint manner in which it was pulled off. When the clerk read a Jewish name, the Jewish citizen would arise and start toward the front of the courtroom as the others had done. Before he stepped half a dozen paces, the prosecutor signalled rejection, and the clerk would mutter, "Step aside, Mr. Shapiro." "Step aside, Mr. Rabinovitch."

Yes, step aside, Jew. Step aside. Step aside, democracy. Step aside, peace. Much of life is being asked to step aside in this case. As much, many feel, as the

Reichstag Fire trial demanded. Yes, Mr. Gouzenko loves Canadian democracy.

CANADA is our next-door neighbor, but it is perhaps a bit too distant for you to have heard the knock on the doors of the thirteen Canadian citizens about 6 A.M. Friday, February 15, of this year. Listen well, neighbor, for that may have been World War III knocking.

The knuckles that rapped on the doors that chilly gray morning belonged to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but the orders did not come from police headquarters. Therein lies a tale which involves your life and mine, and every other man-jack on the globe.

The raids which rounded up the thirteen "spy" suspects were, if you will search your memory, abundantly forecast by the press for weeks. Drew Pearson breathlessly predicted them in his things to come one Sunday night, and who told Mr. Pearson? The London *Mirror* printed a scarehead predicting it, and who told the knowledgeable *Mirror* editors? The answer to these questions is a tale of *hoch-politik*. (I use the Teutonic word advisedly for there is much in all this which is reminiscent of recent German history.) What do you know about the knocks on the door, Mr. Truman? You, Mr. Attlee, Mr. Churchill, Mr. Vandenberg?

Inasmuch as I am attending the trial here in Montreal and deriving a liberal education in jurisprudence, I am particularly susceptible to the word "evidence." The evidence I have for the leading questions above comes from the lips of the Prime Minister of Canada himself.

And who is he? Mackenzie King is the great statesman who visited Hitler in 1937 and came away with the pleasant thought which he transmitted to the press that Der Fuehrer was "a simple peasant who wanted nothing outside Germany." Mr. King was enamored of appeasement policy. He is the worthy who jerked back Canada's



B. Golden.

Sen. Rankest Says:



"— and everybody was as happy as could be, till along came this here Communist, Abraham Lincoln."

representative to the League of Nations for advising oil sanctions against Italy at the time Ethiopia was raped. Though he heads the Liberal Party, he could see nothing so reprehensible about the deeds of the *Partie National Social Chretien* and *Casques d'Acier* (Steel Helmets) who had a way of marching about, raiding libraries and burning progressive books on the streets. But liberalism failed him when it came to prosecuting labor and outlawing the Communist Party. He managed the latter very well. . . . That is Mr. King.

Well, he said on the floor of the House in Ottawa, March 18, 1946, that he came to know about these things, i.e., the "spy ring"—in early September, 1945. On September 5, Mr. Gouzenko rifled the till and departed from the Soviet offices, wandered forlornly about Ottawa with a "sheaf of documents," so Mr. King said, went from newspaper office to of-

fice, was referred to the police authorities who were out for the day, came back to the newspapers, and finally wound up in the Department of Justice with his world-shaking revelations. "Mr. King could not believe his ears, he said. He was thereupon moved to depart precipitately for Washington and London, where he talked with President Truman and Prime Minister Attlee. Nor did he forget Mr. Bevin. He returned to Washington "in company with Mr. Attlee to attend a conference in respect to atomic energy." Then he returned to Canada where he "took up anew the question" into which he had been looking "so anxiously" before he "went away."

I am afraid Mr. King's account of his odyssey is not quite inclusive enough. His errors of omission bear examination. He neglected to say that prior to the "spy scare" Anglo-American imperialism had embarked upon a policy to break Big Three unity; that

the decision had been reached to brand their wartime ally, the USSR, as "imperialistic and aggressive"—in order to conceal Anglo-American plans for world domination. He omitted mention of the fact that the Truman-King-Attlee meeting in Washington produced the shape of the "atomic bloc." He said nothing of "Operation Musk-Ox," with its obvious intention of preparing war bases in the Canadian Arctic. Nor did he mention the plans of Anglo-American monopoly to shift world relationships, to force a crisis. He did not say, as did the knowing Alsop brothers in the New York *Herald Tribune* on March 15, 1946, that Washington was out to "precipitate the most violent kind of crisis." It is perhaps coincidence that Fred Rose, M.P., was arrested that day while Parliament was opening in Ottawa. But it is no coincidence that all this Canadian spy abracadabra was occurring simultaneously with a world diplomatic offensive against the Soviet Union.

Mr. King, Liberal, avoided the explicit statement of Winston Churchill, Tory, at Fulton, that "the Communist fifth column . . ." was "a growing challenge and peril to Christian civilization." Mr. Churchill, protector of all the colonial peoples and world democracy, urged a special arrangement "between the British Commonwealth and Empire and the United States." That arrangement was to include joint military staff work, integration of the armed services and weapons of the two powers, joint operation of naval and air bases. . . . Otherwise it was not to be a military alliance, remember?

Mr. King's record reveals him as one who possesses an abiding confidence in London policy, which today is linked with American plans. The Labor government does the bidding of the atomic imperialists. And who is Mr. King of Canada to say them nay?

AND so Canada was pushed into the breach. It was considered much more advisable for Canada to whip up the anti-Soviet "spy scare" than the United States or Britain, which still hesitate to precipitate a head-on, irrevocable break with the Soviet Union. The latter countries, among other reasons, need time to dampen down the friendly sentiment on behalf of the Soviet ally so evident among millions of our people. Too many in those great countries still remember Stalingrad

when mankind's fate was at stake.

So "little" Canada was chosen. Premier Drew, of Ontario province, the unvarnished Tory imperialist, had for some time taken the initiative in drumming up atomic war against the Soviet Union; now Mr. King, hitherto wary of his constituents' sentiments, acquiesced and undertook practical operations for undermining peace.

This is where democracy-loving Mr. Gouzenko bobs up. Anybody in the know smiles at his tale of wandering around those hours of September 5 looking for somebody to whom he could unburden his now-democratic heart. The pattern is too apt, too stagey. The belief among most men with whom I talked here is that he had been in touch with Canadian authorities well before September 5; that all the rest of the tale is for public consumption.

It is by now a truism that a reactionary foreign policy produces its domestic counterpart, that both are sides of the same coin. Canada, playing the shill for Byrnes and Bevin, had to pursue a certain logic. So things began to happen at home.

Much happened while Mr. King spent his fateful days at Chequers and London. Several members of his cabinet diligently passed what is known here as a *pro-forma* order-in-council, a secret bit of executive action which suddenly deprived Canada of all civil rights. The cabinet assumed prerogatives it had never dared take save in time of war. Under the pretext of national peril, it could secretly arrest, hold incommunicado, grill and third-degree anybody it wished without explanation. It is safe to surmise that a cable passed across the Atlantic from London before the cabinet adopted this measure.

That order laid the basis for arresting the thirteen and subjecting them to refined torture. When the *Winnipeg Free Press* learned about it, the editors wrote: "These are the methods of a police state. They are the methods of a country where individual liberty and individual rights are denied; where they are subject to the caprice and temper of a state which is prepared to reduce its citizens to slavery in order that its will might prevail."

The prisoners, the *Free Press* said, were held incommunicado; they could contact neither their lawyers nor their families. They were subjected to "star chamber methods" that have "been abhorrent to democratic peoples for

four hundred years." Many others spoke similarly.

Listen to the story of F. W. Poland, one of those arrested. He was held nearly four weeks in an improvised jail without charge and without benefit of counsel. "I have been refused access to the order-in-council under which I was arrested," he told the press, "and even to the terms of reference of the Royal Commission which I am told has been appointed to investigate a 'plot' the details of which have been withheld from me. I am not allowed to see any newspapers."

He finally learned he was arrested under an order-in-council covering persons "reasonably suspected of communicating with an agent of a foreign power." He was not even told whether he was suspected or whether a charge would be placed against him. "But I am certainly not being treated as in-

nocent (which I am) until proven guilty."

This is approximately the story of everyone arrested. They were grilled by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, by the Royal Commission set up by the cabinet, the Kellock-Taschereau Commission, subjected to subtle (and not so subtle) psychological tortures. M. J. Coldwell, a member of the House and leader of the Canadian Commonwealth Federation, told his associates: "I almost hesitate to say this because when I heard it first it seemed to me unbelievable. But I was informed by a minister of the gospel last week that he saw a person who had been held at Rockcliffe for some time, and that for six days and nights that person was in a room that was brilliantly lighted, and the lights were never out."

These are some of the methods



"I hope it still fits, Simpkins."

G. Holson.

whereby "testimony" was obtained for sensational use in the present trial: "testimony" the press will headline in the coming days. Of course, the defendants have already been pilloried in the newspapers through the interim reports of the Royal Commission. The word "spy" became the most common noun in English and French journalese here. Even the word "alleged" was dropped in referring to those arrested.

BUT oddly enough the man on Montreal's street appears to be unmoved. There is no hysteria in this majestic city, which stands guard over the mighty St. Lawrence—along which ocean-going craft travel a thousand miles with the nation's rich cargoes. You sit in the courtroom and hear the hoarse basso of the tugboat, which has a way of jeering at the Crown's arguments. They tell me you ordinarily hear a chorus of ocean-going sirens—but it is quiet on the river these days, for the seamen are walking off the boats and are picketing a block or two from the courthouse. They are on strike for an eight-hour day and increased wages.

Canada is witnessing the first stages of a vast strike movement, and let nobody tell you there is no connection between that and this trial. It is as plain as the huge electrically-lit cross on Mount Royal which dominates this metropolis.

The press here writes in two languages—French and English—and it is clamoring "spy trial" in two tongues, while the domestic facts of life, the question of bread and butter, the nation's economic welfare, wages, prices, housing, recede onto the back pages. There was a tipoff on the further motivation of this case in a column written by the Ottawa staff correspondent for the *Montreal Star*. The effect of the case, he said, has been "to completely divert public attention from domestic matters." But the *Star* makes the error common to many newspapers. It confounds the nation's life with its own headlines. Despite the hysterical seventy-two point type, the public is tending its own immemorial needs and the courtroom is veritably deserted. Only the lawyers and the press, plus a bare sprinkling of spectators, are here.

There is eerie contradiction between the crowded front page and the empty benches: something has gone off half-cocked. The people, and especially labor, have not been overwhelmed, stampeded, by the sensational headlines.

But sooner or later the people must go on the offensive against this sort of gestapo drive. There is too much passivity now.

But the Crown is achieving, it hopes, something else. The press services carry news of this case to every nation on the globe. I am told the reactionary French newspapers are headlining it. And no doubt if the Crown gets away with it, the warmongers of every country will make ample use of the proceedings to broadcast Hitler's contentions that the Communist Parties of all countries are agents of Moscow. The prosecution has seen to it that the midget Judas Gouzenko made that statement, just as Jan Valtin did in his *Out of the Night*, as Kravchenko did, as the bogus "General" Krivitsky did before them.

But the Canadian people I meet have not fallen for the hysteria, which must prove most bothersome to the gentlemen behind the whole sorry business. They concocted the trial for two purposes: to shatter world relationships in the drive toward war, and to frustrate the struggle of the Canadian people toward the goals they fought for in the recent war—a better life, some measure of security, and democracy. Many in the unions have seen this stale divisive stuff before; they have encountered it in their own daily struggles. They know that a drive against labor is always preluded by an assault on its most advanced sector, the Communists, and here in Canada, the Labor Progressive Party.

It is difficult to tell what the farmers, and the middle classes, are thinking. They must, undoubtedly, be affected. A recent Gallup Poll indicated that the majority of the Canadian people have been brought to believe that World War III is a probability: that represented a shift in sentiment effected in recent months. No doubt the press did the job.

I talked with people in old Cartier, the district in Montreal which elected Fred Rose twice to Parliament. There is considerable disquiet there, among the shabby homes of the French-Canadians and the Jews, who predominate in this area. The little Red Rose, the French-Canadians there affectionately term Mr. Rose, and if you knew what the hierarchy is up to here, you would realize what that means. The people have seen him in action, and they know the drive against him is an assault upon them, for he has abundantly proved himself their champion in his two terms

of office. His majority doubled the second time he ran, late in 1945.

I talked to a newspaperman after one of the sessions, who must remain nameless for obvious reasons. "I don't like what's going on," he said. "Hell, this guy Gouzenko was in touch with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police long before he walked out on his job. I don't like the looks of things. It seems to me as though we are raising hell with Russia, forcing an issue. We ignored the fact that Gouzenko was officially branded a criminal and thief by the Soviets. We made a hero out of him: and the aid alleged to have been given our Soviet ally by those arrested is described as though it were aid to the Nazis. Just where would we have been if it weren't for the Russians? The sort of thing this is said to be is generally straightened out, quietly, behind the scenes. But the Prime Minister built this thing up, refused to talk things over with Russia before he jammed the stuff into the press. Why?" He spoke of war.

AND all this is reflected in the court. The mumbo-jumbo drones on in two languages. When Gouzenko came on the stand, the Crown's attorney excitedly demanded that the courtroom be cleared of all but lawyers and newspapermen. Mr. Brais, the prosecuting attorney, is a first-rate ham actor; he kept looking back toward the door, jerkily, as though he expected a squadron of Zhukov's men to charge through. A dozen RCMP plainclothesmen surrounded the Russian traitor. When a newspaperman came a bit late and tried to enter, the Crown's attorney feigned great alarm, popping his eyes at the door as though hell were ready to break loose. Before he was through, he had the lawyers and newspapermen glancing over their shoulders at every rustle of a paper. In his questioning he laid heavy, suspicious stress on "deciphering," on "couriers," on every accepted diplomatic procedure all governments use.

He seemed to get more histrionic as the hoarse voice of the last tugboat sounded in action through the window. The port of Montreal was being shut down by indignant seamen. Later I talked with one of the pickets, a lad with service stripes from all the seas, and we got around to the trial. "Shucks," he smiled wryly, "no wonder we can't get higher wages, full employment, better housing. Those Russians stole the plans." ♦



L. to R.; Martin Miller, Perry Wilson, Abbie Mitchell, Richard Williams, Canada Lee, Kenneth Terry.

ON WHITMAN AVENUE

At a meeting of Lawndale home-owners, plans are made to preserve the purity of Northern white real estate. A scene from the current play.

By MAXINE WOOD

This is the latter half of Act 1, Scene 2. We publish it by permission of the author. (The play is copyrighted by the author; no scene can be produced without permission.) A meeting of neighbors has been called at the suburban home of Ed and Kate Tilden, whose daughter Toni has rented the upper story, in their absence, to the family of David Bennett, a Negro veteran. After

a preliminary discussion, most of those present decide to ask David to come down to persuade him to move.

TONI (*entering the living room with David*): I want you all to meet David Bennett. Our neighbors, David. Mr. and Mrs. Reed, Mr. and Mrs. Hall, the Lunds, and Miss Anderson—

(Some nod, others do not acknowledge the greeting.)

JEFF (*offering him a chair*): Sit here, Mr. Bennett.

DAVID: Thank you. (*Kate offers him a drink which he refuses.*) No, thank you.

Ed (*He speaks slowly and carefully—it is evidently very difficult for him*): I suggested that you join us, Mr. Ben-

nett, in this discussion. I admired your frankness when we met this afternoon. You said then that you realized that you were the first colored family to move into Lawndale . . . that there might be a few objections on the part of some people. . . . Well, it seems that there are. In fact that is why my neighbors are here tonight.

DAVID: I understand.

REED: I'd like you to understand, too, Mr. Bennett, that there is nothing personal in this. Mr. Tilden tells us that you are an intelligent young man and have a fine family. I can well believe it. I sell insurance, and many of my most reliable clients are among your people. I like them.

EDNA: And everyone loves old Ace, the janitor at the church. He's done odd jobs in this neighborhood for years.

REED (*paying no attention to his wife's interruption*): But unfortunately, Mr. Bennett, this is not a perfect world. We're just simple people here in Lawndale, working hard to pay for our homes and to keep them up.

DAVID (*tensely. He has been very tense from the moment he entered*): I suggest we get to the point.

REED: I was coming to that, Mr. Bennett. A-ah, to sum up—

LUND: Mr. Reed, as chairman, I'll do the summing up. . . . Bennett, the people here represent four streets in Lawndale. Four streets of home-owners who don't want you in this neighborhood. They're very definite about that. So definite, in fact, that it's not safe for you to stay here.

DAVID: Why?

LUND (*thunderstruck*): Why?

DAVID: Yes. Why is it not safe for us to live here?

LUND: You know the answer to that as well as I do!

DAVID: From the history books, yes. But history is not static, Mr. Lund. We learned in the war—

LUND: Now look here, Bennett, no soap-box—

ED (*sharply*): Walt, we asked David to join this discussion.

LUND (*having a hard time to hang on to himself*): All right—all right! But I just want him to know what he's up against.

DAVID (*coming forward to the table*): I'm under no illusions about that, Mr. Lund.

LUND: Understand, I've got nothing against you, Bennett. In fact I'm responsible for this meeting. I organized this committee because I know this community. I don't want to see

any harm come to you and yours. That's why we've decided for your own welfare you should move tomorrow.

JEFF: The committee didn't vote on that!

ELLEN: Ask for a show of hands, right now, Walt.

LUND: No, let him have the floor.

TONI (*worried, as David is so tense*): Go on, David.

LUND (*putting his hand on David's shoulder*): Talk all you want to, boy. Blow your top. Nobody's going to take offense. . . . We know this is a tough situation for you, and I for one am willing to meet you halfway . . . to dig deep in my pocket. . . .

DAVID (*drawing away*): Money—

LUND: Moving costs money, everyone realizes that. I'm sure we can count on Mr. Tilden to forfeit the rent, but I'm for doing more than that. I'm going to take up a collection to pay for your other expenses.

DAVID (*gripping the table, and turning away from the group*): No—I—

LUND (*pulling a bill from his pocket*): Here's the first ten dollars, folks. Who's going to add to it? This young man made a mistake in judgment, but that's human. We've all made mistakes. Who's going to kick into the collection? How about you, Mr. Reed?

REED (*taking out his bill-fold*): Of course.

LUND: That's fine. That's twenty.

BELLE: Thirty! Count me in!

LUND: Good. How about the rest of you? Come, step lively—who'll make it forty?

DAVID: Stop! (*It is an agonized cry that silences all of them. Trembling, he turns to face the group, his hands gripping the table, his face beaded with perspiration.*) We make progress. The slave block gives way to the collection. Refreshments served while the tar boils. (*He breaks from the group, stumbling towards the diningroom.*)

TONI (*going to him*): David—

DAVID (*making a great effort to speak coherently, though his voice is heavy with strain*): Nerves. Call it that. We have them too. We didn't crack in the war. We were steeled by a dream then. "A better world," the slogans said. But we're home now. . . . Home! Where's the welcome? The Open Door? . . . I tried to register at the university today. . . . So sorry our quota of Negroes is filled. And now you say it's not safe to live

among you. That hurts, ladies and gentlemen. More than shrapnel tearing through the flesh. That was war. You expected that. You knew the enemy, the common enemy. But here at home. . . .

TONI (*realizing it is difficult for him to continue*): We'll speak for you, David.

EDNA: We didn't mean it that way. Mr. Bennett—really we didn't.

DAVID: No. Not as a personal attack against me. I realize that. But you have to keep the nigger in his place. Let's be honest at least. Call this meeting by its right name—a lynching bee, Northern style. No bloodhounds, no tar and feathers, no shriveled flesh on a lonely tree. But the fruit is the same, ladies and gentlemen, the fruit is the same. (*He leaves, Toni going with him.*)

JEFF: "I tremble for my country when I recall that God is just."

LUND: Poetry again.

JEFF: No. Thomas Jefferson. He wasn't a poet, but his words made a bell ring.

ELLEN: It's nothing but hysterical war neurosis. I read all about it in a magazine at the beauty parlor. He'll be all right by tomorrow.

LUND: If there's anything the matter with him, he'll get a good fat pension for life. The government takes care of all veterans, black and white, alike.

TONI (*entering*): He's sitting on the steps. He dreads telling Wini.

KATE: Wini's his wife. She's going to have a baby.

LUND (*rapping on the table*): I'm going to call this meeting to order. We all feel sorry for that boy. But unfortunately his misfortune doesn't change the fact—

AURIE: Ed Tilden, you're certainly not going to put them on the street!

ED: I don't believe there's a person here who would do that.

LUND: Ed, don't you lose your head.

KATE: But what can we do, Walt? It just doesn't seem right—Oh, Ed—

ED: Go on, Kate.

KATE (*nervously*): I—well, it does seem that we ought to give them time to find a place. That is, if it is agreeable to everyone.

EDNA: It's the Christian thing to do. His wife's going to have a baby.

ELLEN: A lot of people have babies.

JEFF: My God! You can give them a month.

BELLE: A whole month! With Mary Lou just sixteen!

JEFF: Nobody's going to look at Mary Lou with those damn braces on her teeth!

EDNA: I think Kate's right. I'm sure Reverend Hough would agree. I make a motion to give them a month.

AURIE: A motion? I second it.

LUND (*counting noses*): Reed, you don't go along with your wife?

REED: I lost a brother in the war, Mr. Lund. . . . I—

AURIE: There's a motion on the floor, Walt Lund!

LUND: And I'm speaking on it. . . . You're letting your sympathy for that boy run away with you. It's not just a case of that family upstairs. . . .

AURIE: That's the family we're talking about!

LUND (*excited and angry. Pounding on the table*): Quiet. I have the floor. It's time you people woke up. You're sitting on a volcano that's ready to erupt. Over a hundred thousand Negroes have come to this city during the war. They've earned big money in the factories and now they think they are as good as you are. We had a riot here last spring. Thousands of dollars of property ruined. . . .

TONI: And eighteen Negroes killed.

LUND: Because they tried to go where they weren't wanted! People didn't ask if they had sons in service either. And they won't ask in Lawn-dale. If that family stays here, I warn you, I can't be responsible—

JEFF: Make yourself responsible for once, not to stir up trouble, but to calm people down.

LUND: I resent that, Hall. Others will too.

JEFF: Who? The Supreme Realty Company?

LUND: Since you brought it up, let me explain the company's stand on this.

JEFF: It's about time. You're representing them, aren't you?

LUND: Yes, I'm representing them! They know there's dynamite in this situation. They've already been pestered with calls for a protest meeting.

JEFF: But they're afraid of the publicity. It's bad business to throw a veteran into the streets. They'd rather Ed's friends did it for them, quietly. . . .

ELLEN: Walt's not just representing the company, but himself too! We're paying for our house like the rest of you. I don't want a nigger for a neighbor.

AURIE: You can't always choose your neighbors, be nice if you could. (*Quickly before Ellen can shout*) All in favor of the Bennetts staying for a

month, raise their hands. (*Everyone but the LUNDS and BELLE raise their hands as the cow-bell clangs.*) That's mother's vote. She's against it. But it passed without her. The first motion I ever seconded in my life and it passed! (*Bell clangs again and she runs to the porch.*) Coming, Mama, darling! Coming. . . . Goodby everybody. Pleasant dreams.

(*As the meeting breaks up, TONI enthusiastically talks to JEFF.*)

REED: We have to go, too. Goodnight everybody. (*They shake hands with KATE and ED at the door and leave.*)

BELLE (*starting for the door*): Jeff!

JEFF: Oh—Are you ready, dear?

BELLE (*to JEFF*): Don't speak to me! (*She sweeps out the door, ignoring KATE and ED.*)

TONI (*As JEFF starts for the door*): Just the same I think you're wonderful, Mr. Hall.

JEFF (*pleased*): I surprise myself. . . . My wife, too, I guess. (*To KATE and ED.*) Goodnight.

TONI (*squeezing KATE's arm*): You came through, Mother. I knew you would.

ED: She didn't let you down, eh, worldshaker.

TONI: No. And you were tops, Dad. We stalled them. We have time now. That's all we need—time.

KATE: Sh-h—(*she motions towards ELLEN, who is putting her knitting away.*)

ELLEN (*to LUND who has gone to the porch and now comes back to the living room*): Is he out there?

LUND: No.

KATE: Are you looking for the boys, Ellen? I think they're in the kitchen. (*She starts for the kitchen.*)

ELLEN (*calling*): Bernie! (*BERNIE comes into the living room.*) We're going home, Bernie. . . . Come on, Walt.

LUND: You two run along. I want to talk to Ed a few minutes.

ELLEN (*as she starts out*): I wouldn't be in your shoes, Kate Tilden, not for a million dollars! (*She and BERNIE leave.*)

KATE: Walt, you'll explain to the people—

LUND: Believe me, I feel for you too, Kate. This is serious business. If you don't mind, I'd like to talk to Ed alone.

ED (*putting his arm around Kate*): My family stand together on this, Walt. Anything you have to say can be said in front of my wife and Toni.

LUND (*shrugs*): If you prefer it that way. You're in for trouble, Ed.

KATE: But Walt, what could we do! Most of the neighbors agreed—

LUND: Sentimentality is cheap when you're not the goat. Believe me, with a home and business here, I'd think twice before I'd let niggers live in my house. That's all. Goodnight. (*He strides angrily to the street.*)

KATE (*at the door*): Walt—

ED: Let him go, Kate.

TONI: Gee—he's a poor loser.

KATE (*turning on Toni*): He hasn't lost anything! It's us! We stand to lose everything, because of them!

(*Curtain*)



"Mike, you shoulda stuck to haberdashery."

SWEENEY IN THE AUTOMAT

With due respect to T. S. Eliot

For every beginning a different end?
Always this personal, hazardous
Groping? Not the same for most of us?
Each beginning extends itself,
Bends to the situation.
Morning with the want-ads.
Night with the blue-plate.

Here I am, a man of mixed emotion,
Both plaintiff and defendant
Arguing the case,
Pro and con, as it depends,
Around the tedium of a week.
A round trip that begins and ends
With loud alarm-clock's warning,
And rubs against our city nerves
Like a tight, new shoe.

I gnaw,
One eye on the baseball score,
Upon a similar bone;
For I am not alone.
Some few of us together
Wear last year's suit
In this year's changing weather.
I gnaw, and I begin to wonder when.
Because my time is borrowed
From an advertisement clock,
Because the fountain
Of my youth is soda-pop,
Shall I be disavowed?

I have looked,
As a man looks at his coated tongue,
Upon the Jew
Deflowered and devoured;
Have seen the Negro,
Prisoner of his skin,
Bleeding make his Calvary;
Have heard among the chalked obscenity
Along some half-decaying wall,
The furious "hah hahs" of children
Learning how life comes and goes . . .
An exchange of blows
In which one's own angry blood
Flows redder than a wedding rose.



John Heliker.

Can I explain these sentiments
Born and raised in tenements,
As well as you have said the things
One no longer wishes to say?
I have not stirred
Among the frightened perfumes
Of the debutantes; nor taken
Tea in mouse-trap rooms.
I am impatient.
Your years between wars spent
Recall the invalid,
Equipped with sores to scratch,
Posted at his radio to catch
The old refrain. I find
The in-between years in the way.
The ack-ack sweeps the automat;
And Mrs. Sweeney weeping on the stair
Wonders why no one will tell her.
Our Lady of Silences screams
Quite hysterically in the cellar.

A. M. KRICH.

THE TOURISTS

Near Billings, Montana, 1940.

Who are these strangers, Brother, moving so early,
Splitting the breeze in the cool of the morn?
*Get off the highway, Brother, they are the tourists,
Marvelling sweetly along.*

Where are they going, Brother, what do they look for,
With their cars so new and their hopes so strong?
*The place they seek, Brother, they cannot remember,
Marvelling sweetly along.*

They do not stop, Brother, by lakeside or hillside,
For love or for labor, for right or for wrong.

*They cannot stop, Brother. Their hearts are too empty,
Marvelling sweetly along.*

They never look, Brother, at us on the roadside.
One glance at the landscape and then they are gone.
*It is himself, Brother, that each one is looking for,
Marvelling sweetly along.*

But their faces are dead and their eyes are crazy
And, Brother, their voices forlorn, forlorn.
*Be careful, Brother, that you are not one of them,
Marvelling sweetly along.*

THOMAS McGRATH.

COMMUNISM AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Marxists view history as the work of men. They aim to bring about such social conditions as will favor the full development of each personality.

By ETIENNE FAJON

M. Fajon is a member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party and Deputy in the Constituent Assembly from the Seine. We publish his article somewhat abridged.

IN ORDER to refute the accusation of fatalism hurled at Marxism, it should be sufficient to recall that Marxism has been elaborated and developed by some of the greatest figures in human history. Karl Marx, a philosopher and economist, a powerful writer and organizer of genius, resembles the giants of the Renaissance. This nineteenth century humanist absorbed the whole culture of the Western world—from the tragedies of Aeschylus to the theology of St. John, from the mechanism of Epicurus to Hegelian dialectics, from the political economy of Adam Smith to Ricardo and the theorists of French socialism. Is it conceivable that this European who wrote forcefully in English, German and French, this thinker who brought about a revolution such as the Western world had not experienced since Descartes, who made of history a science, of sociology a rational technique, this man of action, founder of the International Workingmen's Association—is it conceivable that such a man would have denied the importance of individual thought and action?

And Lenin—economist, polemist, philosopher, learned technician and leader of the Russian Revolution—a leader of men such as may be found but two or three times through the centuries—could we imagine that he would possibly have denied the power of the theorist and the leader?

To imagine that such men held that ideas play no role and that human personality remains without effect on history is a fantastic idea.

Following Marx and Lenin, we Communists understand history to be the exclusive work of men, each historical event being the result of many human wills which may be divergent and contradictory.

But the essential thing is not merely

to recognize that men are responsible for history. The job is to define the conditions under which they make history, to analyze the factors which determine their thoughts and their actions. If nothing determined them, history would be nothing but a chaos of contingencies.

The merit of our system is that it considers history from a scientific point of view. It looks for and discovers its laws. And the knowledge of these laws permits us not only to understand but to foresee events, and to act accordingly.

Just as medical technique is based upon biological science, and engineering technique on the science of physics, so the technique of the legislator and the statesman is founded upon the science of history, of political economy and sociology.

In their study of the origin of ideas, Communists take into account the fact that each generation is born in a definite environment (which evolves continuously), with particular relationships generally determined by the current state of economic development and especially by the prevailing production process. Just as in nature, where each phenomenon is conditioned by accom-

panying phenomena, the great ideas born in any period cannot be separated from the economic and social relationships which characterize that period. To a large extent, ideas are a reflection of social reality and they change with it.

Is the strictly hierarchical Kingdom of Heaven, as described for us by Thomas Aquinas of the Middle Ages, anything more than the idealization of medieval society of which Thomas Aquinas was a part and from which he conceived his ideas?

In the eighteenth century, the splendid growth of the ideas of liberty can be explained only by the sharp conflict between the rising bourgeoisie and the decadent feudal order which presented hindrances to the free play of the new economic forces.

It would obviously be absurd to conclude from this that Communists pretend to explain the personal evolution of a writer or the originality of an artist by the prevailing economic structure of society. But by tracing the general psychology of each period—of which no personal thought is absolutely free—to economic and social reality, and by establishing that it is not man's consciousness that explains his way of living, but on the contrary that it is the way of living that explains his consciousness, we offer a guiding thread in the midst of the complexities of ideas and events.

IT is at this point that we find the falsification of Communist ideas. Because in order to explain men's ideas we rely on material factors, our antagonists conclude that we deny the role of thought in history. We have merely to pose the problem in order to prove their ignorance, for all the sciences have given up the abstract and false concept of cause and effect as antagonistic poles, and have replaced it by the fruitful idea of interdependence and reciprocal action of phenomena.

Moreover, who denies a phenomenon by explaining it? How then can the explanation of the origin of ideas



Helen West Heller.

diminish the role of these ideas or their decisive action which aims at the very transformation of the conditions to which they owe their birth?

There is no contradiction, for example, between explaining the philosophy of the eighteenth century in terms of the conflict of the capitalist development of industry and commerce and the feudal social system, and recognizing that these ideas, by inspiring the whole people, made possible the destruction of feudalism, the transformation of France and upheavals throughout Europe.

Neither does it detract from the role of Communist ideas—which directed the Russian Revolution and gave millions of Europeans the strength to resist fascism—to explain that these ideas sprang from the conflict between the collective form of modern production and the private form of ownership: that

is to say, a conflict between the working class and the common people on one hand and the capitalist class on the other.

Our dialectical method provokes another accusation. That is the claim that Communists invented class warfare. The existence of classes and the conflicts between them are in no way Communist inventions. They are historical facts. Before Marx, French historians like Augustin Thierry, Guizot, Mignet and Thiers admitted that class warfare was the key to French history. This concept makes these apparent contradictions understandable. Without it they would remain insoluble. For example, fierce anti-German chauvinists such as Maurras and Petain sold themselves to Hitler. Others, in their turn, inspired Versailles and Munich. Reversals of opinion like these would be incomprehensible if they were not un-

derstood to be the work of a small financial and industrial oligarchy. This oligarchy was anti-German when its foremost problem was the competition of a rival oligarchy. It became pro-Hitler because its main interest was the defense of its privileges against the French people, and because Hitler was considered to be the best protector of the *status quo*.

In short, ideas and actions cannot be fully understood if, in a given period, economic and social relationships and the evolution of these relationships are not taken into account.

Far from denying the role of the individual, this concept permits the definition of the conditions under which a person can act most effectively. An outstanding person—a thinker, an artist, a man of action—will leave his stamp on human progress only insofar as his ideas and work take into account social reality, express the current needs of society and correspond to the movement of the developing social forces. Just as an engineer who neglects or scorns the laws of nature will produce nothing of lasting value, so the work of a great mind will be short-lived if it runs counter to the progressive movement of society and the social forces in operation. The most prominent man is great only insofar as through him are expressed the necessities of social development and the aspirations of the rising classes. The example of the philosophers of the eighteenth century is a case in point.

Likewise, people of our own time may be evaluated. The written or spoken word, a work of art or a deed in defense of human progress against reaction and fascism, may inspire immortal works, works that contribute to the building of the future of the world. Thus Communists in no way place the laws of historical development in opposition to the thoughts and the actions of leading personalities. The existence of scientific laws of history does not at all imply a fatalism which excludes the role of the individual. On the contrary, a knowledge of the laws of economic and social development enlightens the activity and the thinking of man and permits them to be utilized most effectively.

THE humanism of the Communists is not simply theoretical. The attitude of French Communists was dominated first of all by their desire to liberate France. But once liberated,



"F.F.I. Head," oil by Syd Fossom. Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

France has to determine freely her own form of government. We are striving to orient the choice of the French people toward a change in the economic and social structure of the country. We have never ceased pointing out that the exploitation of the immense majority of the French by a small financial and industrial oligarchy has become a stumbling block to the development of the nation and we have constantly shown that powerful modern production forces, created by the work of the technicians and intellectuals of France, and put to work by the labor of the French workers, stand in opposition to a social system in which widespread poverty prevents the purchase of the wealth which is produced.

For us Communists the welfare and happiness of man, his liberty and future, require the abandonment of a system in which he is not master of the forces created by his thought and work. In the face of this inhuman world, our economic and social ideal is one of a France in which small property (that which is the fruit of personal effort) will be safeguarded, but in which the principal capital goods of the country will belong to the nation as a whole, in which exploitation of man by man will come to an end. A society based on such relationships is a socialist society. But because such a society would do away with certain privileges that depend on the suffering of the majority of citizens, it is systematically misrepresented to the people.

According to our slanderers, a socialist France would offer to each of her sons and daughters nothing but a share in the general poverty. But is it not clear that in a France that has broken the economic barriers which obstruct her productivity, where no selfish interest will any longer oppose improvements in the material conditions of life, each person will have his or her legitimate portion of the collective wealth according to his or her work? Socialism, already realized in one-sixth of the earth, stands as a guarantee to us that the France of the future will not suffer from depressions and unemployment.

We are told also that socialism abolishes individual freedom. On the contrary, socialist society alone can guarantee this freedom. Freedom exists only when the material security of the individual is assured. That is to say, it exists whenever the exploitation of one group by another has ceased. How can a man who, day after day, is in

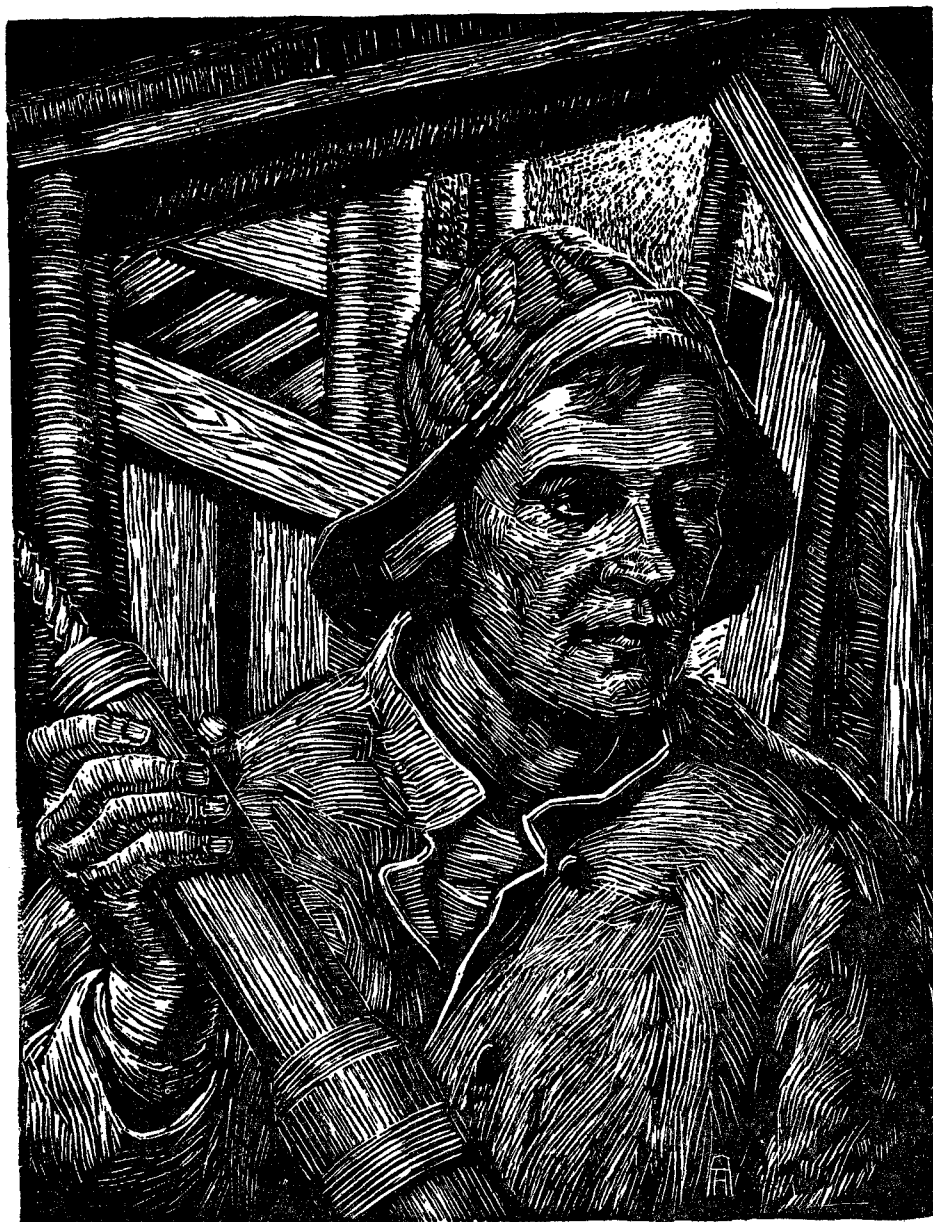
fear of losing his job, his home and his bread, feel free?

Truly, the few exploiters whose rule we wish to abolish are the ones who constantly deny men freedom of speech, organization and action. They threaten the worker with unemployment and utilize fascist methods to destroy all democratic liberties whenever their privileges are threatened.

THE main charge against the Communists is the accusation that we wish to bring about a stupid equality, a standard man and a stifling of individual originality. Here again, the men of the ruling class attribute their own defects to us. What schoolteacher has not often seen his most brilliant pupils, pupils with the possibility of a great future, forced to give up any further education because of poverty? Is it not

evident that social inequality, the foundation of the society we wish to reform, hampers the free development of personalities and tends to bring men down to the lowest levels?

The Communists, on the contrary, wish to bring about such social conditions as will favor the complete development of each personality. Even in 1847 the *Communist Manifesto* denounced stupid ideas of equality as foreign to communism. We do know that men are born with different physical and intellectual potentialities. Far from wishing to abolish these natural inequalities, Communists wish to do away with the economic exploitation that weighs upon the majority of the people; to suppress inequalities of social origin; to guarantee to each individual, from the time of birth, the possibility of developing to the maximum his



"Man With Drill—Moscow," woodcut by Abramovitz.

original talents, of occupying a place in the social scheme in keeping with his intelligence and labor. Our human ideal is one of free men unfolding all the wealth of their personalities in a free society.

Family income too often plays a decisive role in the possibilities of the development of individuals. The new France will select only on the basis of merit. Just as is being done on one-sixth of the globe, men of any social origin will be permitted to become directors of factories, scholars, authors and painters with the only condition being that they are of the best in their particular field. Our nation will guarantee to them their material existence and their education so that the most gifted will be enabled, in fully realizing their possibilities, to bring to France all the wealth of their work and thought.

It is the rule of the trusts which limits culture and makes it a privilege for a minority: "We don't expect you to think. We have other men who are paid to do that." This is the formula of big capital. This is condemnation to a life without thinking—that is, a life without living.

In the France we will organize man will no longer be a means. He will be an end in himself. He no longer will struggle in a jungle of competing ambitions and appetites, in the chaos of anarchistic desires, dominated by the drive for profit. He will consciously direct his life according to a collective plan creating the conditions of his own existence, which, up to now, have ruled over him. He will at long last become the master of his fate and history.

Our trust in man and in reason leads us to claim for each individual the right to think, to say and to write what he thinks, the right to associate with those who think as he does, to pass judgment on those who govern, and to participate in the administration of public affairs. And as a corollary we require the punishment of those who, taking advantage of our national havoc, violated the freedoms which they feared as a threat to the privileges of the oligarchy they never ceased to serve.

We defend human values when we fight against inequalities of rights based on differences of race or religion. We defend human values when we fight for the demands of the workers. We see a valuable human personality in the humblest of workers. Heirs to twenty-five centuries of Western civili-

zation, we continue this tradition of humanism which has never ceased to recognize the worth of the individual.

It is because of this national and human policy that our Communist Party, born in the heart of the working class, has become today the greatest party in France. For many years now there has been realized in our ranks the indispensable alliance of intellectuals and workers. At the head of our great popular movement Thorez, the miner, and Langevin, the world-famous physicist, are found side by side. At the call of our Party, workers and intellectuals of France have fraternally united for the same fight. They have languished in the same jails, have been shot by the same firing squads, dedicated to one purpose—that of saving both our country and the freedom of the world.

Thanks to the training of our Party thousands of Frenchmen have become heroes. This is due to the fact that the Communist derives from his materialistic and scientific conception of the world the reasons to fight and die for the highest of ideals. He has an equal interest in the daily preoccupations of the worker and in the great issues of the world's future. He is able to throw light on practical problems because of study and theoretical analysis.

In a word, our strength is found in the truth of our doctrine, the humanism of our politics, and the quality of our members.



Deckinger.

For the last twenty years there has been hardly one reactionary politician who has failed to prophesy the end of Communism. Our foes have disappeared; one after the other they have sunk into helplessness or treason. But Communism has remained. We are strong because we continue to build France, because we are France—France in her youth, in her boldness and in her freedom.

In order to hide their own crimes, Hitlerite Frenchmen have accused us in the past of obeying foreign directives because we did not hide our admiration for the great Soviet system and for the masters of socialist thinking in other countries. They condemned us because we proclaimed that France could and must adapt her genius to the great principles which, in a few years, have made of the most backward country in Europe the only state strong enough to stop fascism. Because of this we are accused of being foreign agents.

At that rate Voltaire, master of French thought, would have been a foreign agent, since he admired the Englishman Locke's philosophy and spread its guiding concepts throughout France. And the great Revolution of 1789 would have been anti-national since it was inspired by the experiences of the English Constitution.

In fact, it is our slanderers, the servants of the capitalist class, who abandon France. Before selling and delivering France to the invader, they disowned everything that made our fatherland great throughout the centuries—from Abelard to Rabelais, from Descartes to Diderot; they rejected her faith in reason and man, and the cultivation of science and literature.

Heirs to the treasure of knowledge gathered by man during his history, we carry on the traditions of French thought. We wish to restore the intelligence of man to its rightful place in our country. We wish to free science from the chains of an outmoded economic and social system so that it may be placed at the service of man and make his life a happy one.

This is the reason why nothing can prevent French intellectuals from joining us. The Communist Party, with its doctrine and goals, with its special type of politics and the quality of its members, offers to everyone a limitless field of activity and permits the harmonious and full realization of the main ideals of each man and woman. ♦

Personal Problem Answered

TO NEW MASSES: The letter from A. B. entitled "Personal Problem" in your May 21 issue poses the question of whether it is "proper" for an individual to enter the field of journalism in order to aid in the fight against fascism instead of becoming a scientist, which seems, to this individual, to be his *forte*. For over a year a number of my friends and I, all internes and residents in medicine, have had discussions on this subject, and I think that our conclusions might be of interest to A.B.

In the first place, the question of ability in the alternate field in which the individual thinks he may be of help—whether it be writing, organizing, or any field devoted mainly to political activity, as opposed to ability in the non-political field—must be weighed carefully. We believe that a mediocre writer might be of less help than a member of one of the professions in good standing who can spread an understanding of socialism.

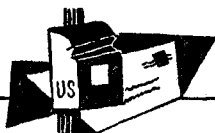
Second, and as an extension of the above thesis, what seems to be needed most in the liberal cause? To outsiders like us, the most important difficulty seems not to be a dearth of writers of outstanding ability, but that liberal writers have access to only a small segment of the population, and that segment usually agrees with them in substance anyway. The answer to this problem was given in an article which appeared recently in NM called "I Was a Dragon." We need more middle-class people who have the temerity to introduce and discuss principles of socialism in their daily contacts. We need people to crusade at home by getting fellow workers to read NEW MASSES and the *Worker*, by exposing slant journalism while reading the other fellow's newspaper over his shoulder, by an occasional provocative question during the newspaper after-lunch conversation, by putting the news all together and showing the whole pattern once in a while, and by numerous similar ways of demonstrating that a middle-class citizen should keep his attention on human progress.

Since we had these discussions our group has scattered over the whole country, and we are having some amazing and gratifying results, even in the ultra-reactionary profession of medicine.
M. D.
Washington.

Reader Bites Critic

TO NEW MASSES: Oh, come now. I'm on your side in the matter of *On Whisman Avenue*, but Isidor Schneider's tears at the grave of *Woman Bites Dog* are a little too much to take. I went to see the show the second night, regardless of what the critics said, because I wanted to make my small contribution to keeping the thing alive, since it seemed to me that it might be saying something that need to be said. What I found was a complete stinker—and at current theater prices yet!

mail call



If there is any sin, it is not on the side of the critics. It is the Spewacks who must answer for it. They took an important theme and made it into an inflated bladder. You can't knock down dangerous ideas or vicious people with that sort of weapon. This was a show, so valid in conception but so foolish and blundering in execution, that need have given the Pattersons and the McCormicks no concern whatever. If Sam and Bella had to write a farce on this subject—which I personally think should have much more solid treatment—there are any number of farces in theatrical history (if not so many in our own time) that do well and skillfully the jobs they set out to do. The Spewacks didn't follow the example. *Woman Bites Dog* was just bad news.

S. KAUFMAN.

New York.

In Memoriam

TO NEW MASSES: I am enclosing a short "poem" which I wrote in memory of a friend, Lieutenant Sam Keil, who died in Iran, 1944, while serving with the U. S. Army. Sam had many friends among the readers of NM, and if you could include it somewhere I would be very grateful.

*Sam: Your big, homely hands are cold;
Your great heart still.
The gut-grinding job they gave you
Is done—for now.*

A war is over: The War goes on.

*We prayed you would be spared, Sam,
For that Last Fight
When Decency and Life will triumph
Over Greed and Death.*

We miss you now: we'll need you then.
J. W. BOWIE.

Chicago.

Something for All

TO NEW MASSES: Your recent articles on literature as a weapon have done much to increase the prestige of Marxist criticism. They are such a great improvement over the narrowness of the left-wing viewpoint during the Thirties.

Let's have more articles, and let's not attempt a denial of the great literature of the past. It is my contention that all true art is revolutionary in the sense that it reveals truth; it is only the artist as a human being, conditioned by the society in which he lives, that is decadent. Let's show that all literature is a signpost pointing to the deplorable state of things, showing that society is sick

and must be cured. Let's expose the dialectic which functions in art, and which places it on the side of the people because it is concerned with truth.

The time will come when the artist as well as his creation will be progressive. It is up to those sections of the literary world to show the artist as well as the layman that art, in order to communicate, must come from that level of experience which has the greatest degree of universality.

Marxist criticism is coming of age, and soon will show itself to be the only reliable voice which can direct and explain the art of the past and present. Keep up your thoughtful and intelligent stand on the question of whether art can serve the people or should be allowed to become the plaything of the bored and blase.

To stimulate interest in the implications of "art-with-a-definite-life-function" is to prepare for the day when it will become something integral in our lives, something for all men.

Congratulations on your great and increasing success.
JOHN M. HOLMES.
New York.

We're Happy Too

TO NEW MASSES: The new NM created an additional burden to my space problem in cramped quarters. Where I used to occasionally clip articles from NM that were of interest to me, I now keep the whole issue. Very fortunately, somebody seeing me buried under books, clippings and magazines made me a gift of a bookcase. So keep up the high quality of NM—I am ready for all of it.

H. F.

Los Angeles.

Bouquet for Burger

TO NEW MASSES: Thanks for the new NEW MASSES. Its very existence will stimulate the growth of a people's culture. Much that would otherwise be rejected almost before conception as "unpublishable" will be finished now that there is such an outlet.

William Thor Burger's articles are outstanding examples of Marxist criticism in a much neglected field. I also think the idea to run a series on "Books that Changed the World" is wonderful and exciting. But why not keep these articles somewhat simpler so that they can really serve as an introduction to Marxist classics?

GERDA LERNER.

Los Angeles.

COUNTERATTACK

WHAT until now—until a few days ago—was blurred and hard to see has become as clear as the sun at high noon. We are beginning to know our enemies. For that the dispossessed of America must be grateful to Mr. Truman. In one speech he revealed that the job of being President of the United States is less important—far less—than being servitor to the corporate powers. It will go down in the history books that on the Saturday afternoon when the trusts unleashed their congressional goons to beat labor into a pulp, labor and its friends saw the real state of things in a way they were not seen before.

Then came the tidal wave of protest and counter-pressure. Labor is striking back with a force that will make the big boys on top rue the day they started their dirty business. They are not easy in their minds, this ruling class of ours. They are afraid of the men and women who have tasted the fruits of unionism. Fourteen million of them have learned how to fight in the "free enterprise" jungle, how to parry blow for blow. And this not alone on the picket lines. A good many of them have been to Europe and to Asia where they became masters at beating down those who also had neat little labor laws, laws against such dangerous thoughts as vacations with pay or the right to strike without being drafted into an army to slave for a dollar a day and be shot if they refused.

This chapter in American history terrifies the employers. No longer can they meet it in the old-fashioned way, with local police and hired thugs. Now they corral the White House, and the Army brass hats and the admirals—all the police paraphernalia of the richest government on earth. For the first time in the life of America they even round up the Secretary of State, fresh from his European "triumphs." Get busy, Mr. Byrnes, they say, and try your bulldozing technique right here. And thus millions learn the hard way and the slow way what Lenin taught years ago—that the capitalist state is a repressive force acting under banker-industrialist rule.

It is a tribute, then, to the power of the American working class and its firm allies that the federal political guns have been called forth to do the job which the bankers and industrialists cannot quite do by themselves. It is also a yardstick of American capitalism's intentions. In Europe and the Far East it has already shown its hand in attempting to restore the remnants of fascism to positions of authority. There the hand appears in all its grasping and clawing motion. Here it has been draped in velvet so that even the liberals have talked about the Truman administration's "forward-looking" domestic program while being somewhat dismayed by its work abroad. But now the hand is uncovered and the difference between the administration's

foreign policy and its home policy is the difference between two peas from the same pod. In Paris Mr. Byrnes speaks for the bankers, and on his return to Washington continues the job for them with the railroad workers. Thus the circle is closed.

AND now, by some magical transformation, the Republicans have become the stalwarts of labor. Senators Taft and Vandenberg have donned overalls—but one sees enough of their faces to recognize them as imposters. Those who pushed through the infamous Case bill, those who cut the heart out of OPA, who for years fought every bit of progressive labor legisla-



Spirit of Musso: "I t

By THE EDITORS

tion now on the books, who cheered the massacre of Chicago workers in 1937 by the Republican head of Republic Steel, now attempt to cash in on Mr. Truman's "embarrassment." They are the buyers in a bankruptcy sale. Their strategy is purely one of getting votes and more power before they themselves pass their own special brand of fascist labor restrictions. What a farce and perversion of democracy when two hours after Truman's speech the House Republicans and Democrats, without any discussion or study, passed Truman's proposals almost unanimously! Only after the Republican chiefs of staff began sensing fresh opportunities for cheap glory did their party disciples sit back on their

hands waiting for bigger killings. Byrnes' alliance with Vandenberg on foreign policy seems not to hold on domestic matters—but that is only a passing stage—a sham battle between the "outs" against the "ins," utterly without principle or conviction.

To labor and its middle-class allies an opportunity has come, for in this crisis millions more now know how the wind blows. They see in greater or lesser degree that in preparing to take the country into war Truman needs Hitlerite labor legislation. To sense the trade union movement's alertness one need only read the labor press, to watch what hundreds of union locals have been doing and saying in the past two weeks, or to study the statements of labor leaders. There are other signs, indirect but meaningful. Mr. Truman's press secretary has repeated all too often that the White House received 7,000 telegrams in support of the Truman bill. He kept on saying it again and again: was he afraid that no one believed him?

The people must, however, prepare for bigger onslaughts in the future by mobilizing all their resources now. We write before any final action has been taken on the Truman measure—but no matter the outcome, what has happened until now will be a child's game compared to what big business has in store. Slowly but surely it will attempt to whittle away all rights of collective bargaining. It will attempt to go back to the injunctions and the split heads of earlier picketlines. It will try to create an atmosphere in which to be a union organizer will be like working in the anti-fascist underground. It fears labor's power and prepares to meet it accordingly.

But it will have tough sledding if there is unity of the Big Three—the CIO, the AFL, the Railroad Brotherhoods. And the parallel moves which all three have made on Truman's proposals can have their greatest fruit in independent political action that will clean out the betrayers in Congress and have as a large perspective the eventual organization of a new anti-monopoly party.

No one should minimize the might of the enemy. The whole weight of reaction's blows is in one sense directed at testing the strength of the working class and its allies, to see how quickly they will respond and what counter-measures they will take. If big business and its political lackeys sense weakness or hesitation, they will rush in with new straitjackets, new repressions. The people have the heart and the means to win. On the trade unions rests the shape of the country's future—whether it will be a future of war and desolation or of life. Let no one sit on his hands while the minutes tick away. This is the opportunity, the big chance to do a job on Hitler's heirs which they will not soon forget.



trains run on time."

WHAT I SAW IN POLAND

A first-hand report answering the falsehoods propagated abroad. "The people are full of enthusiasm, eager to build a new and better future."

By WALTER STORM

Warsaw (by mail)

MY TRIP through Poland has convinced me that the accusations made against the Polish Provisional Government are simply malicious untruths. In a two months' visit I had good opportunities to see conditions as they really are, and I found them unrecognizable after the slander campaign against Poland in the British and American press. Let me answer from my observations and experiences some of the charges which are being levelled against Warsaw.

They charge that Poland is a police state. Presumably this means that the government is kept in power by a kind of Gestapo with arbitrary powers of arrest and punishment. But according to the present Polish legal code, no person may be arrested without a warrant signed by the prosecutor; all arrested persons must be brought before a court within forty-eight hours of arrest; and no person may be punished without a proper trial. The Habeas Corpus Act is part of Polish law. All defendants are entitled to have defense counsel and in serious cases the state provides counsel when the defendants are unable to employ their own. The security police are governed by the

same legal provisions as the ordinary police.

My informant, Dr. Kleinman, Chief of the Bureau of Justice, observed that the procedure in Poland is the same as in all European countries, including Great Britain, but excluding Spain. There is in fact no police force in Poland in the sense known to Britons or Americans. The old police force collaborated too willingly during the occupation, and has been almost entirely disbanded. Police functions are carried out by soldiers and armed citizens, and the democratic and popular character of the police force is shown by the fact that trade union leaders have made urgent appeals to workers to join the Police Reserve. If the presence of armed guards outside public buildings or at control posts on the roads causes surprise to visitors, it must be remembered that Poland is emerging from chaotic conditions, and fascist banditry has not yet been completely eliminated. Everything I have seen suggests that the police are protecting civilians, not harrassing and intimidating them. Among the many people with whom I talked I met no one who can speak from his own knowledge of instances of capricious arrest. I did encounter some talk of "mysterious disappearances," but when I probed for names, places and dates, the stories dissolved in vagueness.

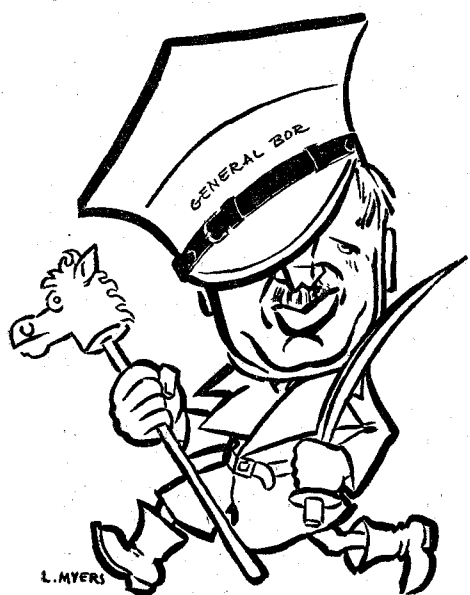
Let me say at once, however, that there is political persecution: but it is persecution of the fascist bands which terrorize some of the country districts and of those who still try to promote fascist activity. But apart from this all political activity is permitted. The Peasant Party (PSL), led by Stanislaw Mikolajczyk, is preparing an election fight, and is running a widespread campaign against the regime. The newspapers of the PSL are sold openly alongside the papers of other parties. There are at least two well-known journals (*Tygodnik Warszawski* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*) in Poland

which oppose the nationalization projects of the government.

I have not noticed people being cagey or secretive about their political views, which is what one would expect if there were political persecution. I have heard many frank political arguments in restaurants, trains and other public places. One must conclude that if it is dangerous to talk politics in Poland, there are many people who risk their necks in an incredibly stupid way.

The open publication of opposition newspapers and journals should be sufficient evidence of freedom of the press. However, as the position of the press in Poland is not quite the same as in Britain or the U.S., the matter needs to be discussed a little more fully. The Polish government has set up a Newspaper Control Office which may, in certain circumstances, suspend a newspaper. These circumstances, as recently outlined by President Beirut at a press conference for American correspondents, are when a newspaper consistently carries false news, or indulges in inflammatory comment likely to cause friction with other states. Within these limits the Polish press is free. Such restrictions would, no doubt, be a serious brake on the Hearst or Beaverbrook newspapers, and that is why some foreign correspondents consider them dictatorial. But the Polish people have reason to congratulate themselves that they now have a press free from monopoly control and therefore free from most of the anti-democratic perversions of the truth that are spread by newspapers in the U. S. and Britain.

Now for the charge that Poland is shut off from the world by an iron curtain. This is the easiest of all to answer. In Poland there is a regular two-way traffic, both of news and of newspaper correspondents. There is no censorship of dispatches, as every correspondent must admit. Months ago, before communications were reestablished with the rest of the world, some



correspondents were even allowed to use the Polish radio to send dispatches to their papers. As for the inward traffic of news, most people listen to overseas broadcasts and many read British and American newspapers which are sold in the shops. The iron curtain exists only in the minds of those who prefer to believe their own myths rather than the true facts.

Another myth is that Poland is under Russian occupation. I have seen military occupation in Germany, and know what it looks like—military government officials installed in the public buildings, soldiers billeted in commandeered houses, street signs, notices and orders in the language of the occupation authorities, the pavements full of occupation soldiers, military police at every corner. There is nothing like this in Poland. There are no commandeered buildings, no Russian notices. There are no Russians in administrative posts, or in charge of factories or industries. In Warsaw there are fewer Red Army soldiers than there were Americans in London at the beginning of this year. In Lodz and Cracow the number of Red Army men is somewhat larger, but still very small. You can walk about the streets and see no more than a dozen in the course of a day. Only in the countryside near Breslau, which is close to the Russian zone in Germany, did I see any considerable number of Red Army men, and that was because I passed through an area where the Red Army is running some farms to help maintain the occupation forces in Germany.

A false story is also being spread that Poland is on the verge of civil war. The idea has great appeal to all reactionaries because it involves a double prospect—the unsaddling of the present regime and an upheaval on the Soviet borders which could perhaps be fanned into something bigger. For this reason bandit stories get more space in the reactionary press than any other news from Poland. What is not advertised is that the terrorist activity is really part of an incipient war of intervention against Poland.

The terrorist organizations are composed of remnants of the underground army, of Polish fascists and of German deserters, mostly SS men who have good reasons for not wanting to return home. Lately they have been reinforced by soldiers from General Anders' Polish emigre army flown from

Italy and parachuted down with arms, supplies and money.

Since Mikolajczyk of the Peasant Party decided to fight the democratic bloc in the elections, terrorist activity has increased, and an increasing number of Socialists, Communists and Jews are being murdered. In reality Mikolajczyk is an advance scout for Polish reactionaries at home and abroad, who back him to win the election, and thereby reverse the government's reforms. If this comes off, the situation in Poland may eventually resemble that in Greece. This explains why the Anders army has been kept going for so long, and why the terrorists so determinedly stay on the job of murder and plunder.

Mikolajczyk's plan depends upon a

growth of general discontent with the government. But, in fact, the very opposite is happening, and happening so rapidly that the plan already begins to look hair-brained and ludicrous. It is true that there are disaffected elements, particularly among the middle- and upper-classes, and also much grumbling about the hard living conditions among workers and peasants. But the political situation, fluid though it has been, is beginning to harden into solid support for the government. Leading government spokesmen have no doubt that the referendum to be held in June will be a vote of confidence in the government's program. Reports from all over Poland show that the workers stand solidly behind the government, and are prepared to defend it by armed



"Harvest," woodcut by Stanley De Graff.

force if necessary. They cannot but support a government which, through its nationalization projects, gives workers' interests first priority.

Even the peasants, whom Mikolajczyk depends upon for the bulk of his support, are coming over to the democratic bloc. This was shown at a national conference of peasants in Warsaw in April when Mikolajczyk was hooted out of the hall, and at Lodz, where most of his candidates for positions in the peasant cooperatives were defeated. The peasants have no real ground for opposing the government's land reforms. Everything indicates that without encouragement and help from the outside, from the British and American governments, the opposition would fizzle out.

IT HAS also been said that members of the overseas Polish forces are victimized on their return. I have met many of these soldiers, and not one had any complaints to make about his treatment here in Poland. I should like especially to mention two such soldiers—a lieutenant general who had been on the General Staff in London, and a major who had been stationed in Scotland for most of the war. Both told me they have been given equivalent posts in Marshal Zymiersky's army. When I questioned them about the alleged victimization of Poles returning from abroad, they stated they knew of no such cases. Even the reactionary rumor factory in Warsaw is not marketing this one, because it is so obviously inconsistent with the facts.

When Mr. Bevin says he intends to give Polish soldiers protection, one wonders from whom they are to be protected. The government is anxious to have its soldiers home to help rebuild the country. When they arrive here they come before a board which discusses their future. If they wish to, they remain in the army, retaining their rank, decorations and privileges. Otherwise they are given suitable civilian jobs. It seems too obvious to say, but the Polish government, with its desperate shortage of workmen and technicians, would hardly want to terrorize 150,000 men into remaining permanent exiles.

The present Polish Provisional Government, as part of its program, has banned anti-Semitism and racial discrimination of any kind. It has made it a punishable offense, and the government is taking rigorous steps to com-

bat it. Moreover, it has opened all avenues to the Jews for the first time in Polish history. Jews occupy high government positions, are workers and executives in factories, and attend universities. The Polish government is doing everything possible not only to protect Jews from further discrimination, but to rehabilitate Jewish life. In spite of this, the fact must be faced that there is anti-Semitism. It exists among Poles who were anti-Semitic before the war, among Poles who learned anti-Semitism from the Germans, and among Poles who today still enjoy the benefits of property stolen or extorted from the Jews.

On a more organized scale anti-Semitic activity is carried out by the bandits and pro-fascist terrorists who are campaigning against the present regime in Poland—bandits who are being assisted with arms and money, and reinforced with personnel from the Anders army in Italy. Here we have political anti-Semitism. The govern-

ment is not taking this lawlessness lying down. It is relentlessly crushing these bands, and undoubtedly they will soon be liquidated.

No one has any right to expect everything to be back to normal in Poland at this juncture. Poland emerged from the war exhausted, impoverished, its economic and social structure ruined. A quarter of its population is dead. Its farms and cities have been devastated, its roads and railways torn up, its harbors dynamited. But there is a spirit here to match the gigantic problems of reconstruction. The government, with its sleeves rolled up, is tackling its job with ability, direction and purpose. The people are full of enthusiasm, eager to build up a future much better than the past. It is unfair to see only the still unsolved problems, the political differences, the stresses and strains of recovery from the ruins of war, and to ignore the great progress that has been made so far. ♦



"Miss Glamour, can't you show more of the wedding ring?"

review and comment



GIANTS OF IRELAND

Two books which exemplify the epic power that an understanding of politics adds to art.

By S. FINKELSTEIN

DRUMS UNDER THE WINDOWS, by Sean O'Casey. Macmillan. \$4.50.
LAND, by Liam O'Flaherty. Random House. \$2.50.

ONE of the major events of modern literature is the magnificent stream of writing that has poured almost continuously from the thinly populated and poverty-stricken land of Ireland. It is easy to ascribe the reason merely to the accidental appearance of men of genius like Yeats, Synge, Joyce, O'Casey and O'Flaherty. But such thinking ignores the truth that great art must be made as well as born. These men wrote in no vacuum. They both created and were created by the Irish national literary movement.

In art, as well as politics, the national movement is one of the most turbulently creative of forces, and one of the least understood. It is often belittled. Generally, national qualities are recognized only among the lesser artists who make an unsubtle use of folk elements, while the greater artists are characterized as "universal." Other critics ignore national roots altogether. They wax lyrical over the exotic, strangely symbolic qualities of a work of art which any peasant from the artist's homeland would recognize as following a familiar folk pattern. The illuminating fact is that the Irish writers created a culture in collaboration with the organized movement for Irish freedom. The ties between art and people always existed, although weakened by mutual confusions and by a reaction-inspired bigotry. It was the political revival of national consciousness through Irish language and folklore that gave these writers their com-

bination of richness with simplicity in image and song. The creation of a people's theater gave them an inspiring form, so that Synge grew from a minor critic to a major playwright, and Yeats tempered his mysticism to produce a powerful series of political dramas in poetry. Irish literature was always a fighting literature.

It is therefore not surprising that today Sean O'Casey, in *Drums Under the Windows*, tells not merely the third section of his own story but the story of Ireland between 1900 and Easter week. And O'Flaherty in *Land* continues the task he set himself in the unforgettable *Famine* of telling in novel form the history of the Irish revolution.

Both these writers define the new temper brought to Irish writing by the bloody uprising of Easter Week, 1916. Missing is the "Celtic Twilight" and the vague search for the character of the Irish people. There is instead a clearer and more realistic vision, and a searching political questioning so much a part of the substance of these books that what we have is not the introduction of politics into art, but a fine art that operates on a political level. The most personal sections of O'Casey's book, such as the deeply moving death of his brother Tom and sister Ella, gain added strength from his sense of how unnecessary is such wasting of human mind and flesh. "Life became a maze of rotting things from which there was no escape till she lay down for the last time to crumble into dust in the midst of her crumbling poverty and gifts." His initiation as a pick and shovel wielder is a jolly and heartwarming picture of Irish workers.

Throughout the book appear the leaders of Irish nationalism, their ideas searchingly examined: Arthur Griffith, Douglas Hyde and the Gaelic Leaguers, obsessed with the past, aloof from the common people, confusing freedom for the Irish people with freedom for Irish factory owners to replace the British; Father O'Hickey, who fought vainly in Dublin and Rome to make the Irish language part of the curriculum of the Catholic schools of Ireland; Jim Larkin, calling the Dublin transport workers to fight the employers' lockout; Jim Connolly, speaking a language of socialism that was at first strange to O'Casey; Padraic Pearse and Tom Clarke, martyred alongside Connolly in the aftermath of Easter Week.

O'Flaherty, working on a smaller scale, brings us the Ireland of the 1870's with the first secret organizations that came out of the terrors of the famine; the guerrilla warfare and terroristic acts that served as retaliation against landlord brutality, the growing consciousness of their own strength among the people, and the invention of the powerful "boycott" weapon. Here, as in *Famine*, O'Flaherty has replaced his confused underworld and politics of *The Informer* with a search for the inner movement of history. This gives the novel a natural plot, epic in scope. The search for "character" is replaced by the discovery of the Irish people as a powerful collective character.

THE influence of James Joyce is apparent in both books. This may seem surprising, but only because the Irish quality of Joyce is insufficiently recognized. Joyce's decision to cut himself off from his own people, to seek the "conscience of his race" within "his own soul," affected his style but not his national consciousness. *Ulysses*, for all its complicated literary device, is both a realistic novel of middle-class Dublin and a sharp criticism of the vague and wishful thinking that affected the leaders of Irish politics and art at the opening of the century. O'Flaherty shows the influence of Joyce in the clarity of his descriptions, and in the restraint with which he uses his natural folk imagery, free from the lushness, the dreamland quality and sentimentality which Joyce swept out of Irish literature.

In O'Casey the Joyce influence is a positive factor. It can be seen in the wonderfully subtle ear he has for hu-

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man speech, so that the cadence of each sentence differs with the person speaking; in the careful choice of words so that the language itself becomes a concentration of experience, and the words take on a symbolic as well as a realistic meaning; in his mixture of real description with imaginative fantasy, within which he can play passionately and satirically with ideas. For example, here is his description of the execution of Clarke, Pearse and Connolly:

"The face of Ireland twitches when the guns again sing, but she stands steady, waiting to fasten around her white neck this jewelled string of death, for these are they who shall speak to her people forever; the spirit that had gone from her bosom returns to it again to breathe out hope once more, and soon to sing.

"Ere the tiny curl from the gun muzzles has hid in the upper air, the flames lash out again, and Connolly, last of the lost leaders, lost his place in life, and becomes a marbled memory.

"Black prison vans, packed with prisoners, cavalry with naked swords before and behind them, move swift through the streets. Crowds, silent and sullen, watch them go by at the street corners. . . . And the Castle is alert and confident; files all correct, and dossiers signed and sealed for the last time. Now the Irish may be quiet and quit their moan, for nothing is whole that could be broken. And the glasses are full of wine, and cigar smoke incenses the satisfaction.

"But Cathleen, the daughter of Houlihan, walks firm now, a flush on her haughty cheek. She hears the murmur in the people's hearts. Her lovers are gathering around her, for things are changed, changed utterly."

What differentiates O'Casey from Joyce is his deeper sympathy for people and his anger at those who condemn them to misery. His use of material from Joyce reflects a powerful mind with so much of its own to say that it can boldly adopt what is useful to it. This distinguishes him utterly from the Joycean cults which grew up in Paris.

O'Casey raises in the public world of his art the same question that Joyce raised in his private world, of an entire reevaluation of the relation of prose and poetry; for his book is a culminating point in Irish poetry as well as prose. As with poetry, each rereading is a fresh experience. It is not always easy reading, for it is a record of O'Casey's inward debate and some-

times painful growth. He also occasionally assumes that every reader is familiar with the details of Irish history. But generally the difficulties are the price that must be paid for great writing.

These two books are an example of the epic power that an understanding of politics adds to art. In this respect they are not an innovation, but part of the great line of descent from Biblical and Greek days, when art was one of the means evolved within society for education and the debate of ideas. They are addressed as such education to the Irish people, although the censorship enforced by the present government of Eire bars them from circulation at home. They illumine Irish history for the benefit of the entire world. If O'Flaherty carries on his project, and shows as much understanding of the Irish workers as he does of the land revolt, he will have produced one of today's major achievements in the novel, just as the three volumes of the O'Casey autobiography stand up as a prose and poetic masterpiece of our time. More than being simply "good books" they are lessons in how art develops rich values when aligned with a people's national consciousness; how such a nationally inspired art in turn raises the level of the political movement; and how much depth and grandeur of line is gained by art when it is based on a clear understanding of history as created by people.

In Fascism's Garden

THE FAITH OF A LIBERAL, by Morris R. Cohen. Holt. \$3.75.

WHAT do we find in this faith of a liberal? We find: superficial and erroneous historiography—the Magna Carta mechanistically interpreted and so dismissed; the extension of the suffrage represented as accomplished by the *idea* of liberalism; the formal freeing of the Russian serfs (incorrectly dated) treated as the gift of a self-abdicating ruling class, the emancipation of American slaves ascribed simply to "technological conditions"; political control in New York, Pennsylvania and Illinois actually ascribed to farmers and not finance capital; we find slander of the Soviet Union, where, according to Cohen, inequality and imperialism—all the very worst features of capitalism—have reappeared; we find throughout an identification of the



Bolshevik and Nazi governments and of Communists and fascists; we find the crassest distortions of Marxism, which have been refuted a thousand times (it is deterministic, ignores the role of humankind in history, and divides all mankind into workingmen and capitalists); we find absurd characterizations of revolutionaries as people who worship violence *per se*, and who, in their recklessness, never consider the dangers, difficulties, complications and hardships implicit in the reorganization of society.

Where do all these distressing conclusions lead this professional philosopher? When he "first approached the temple of philosophy," he confesses, he did so "with boyish ardor for economic science and zeal for social reform." But the ardor and zeal have disappeared and now that "faith" alone remains, what can philosophy do for men? "It can," Professor Cohen tells us, "teach them to lift their eyes to the heaven above the human scene and in its beauty free themselves from the compulsion of their vain and petty desires." Yes, "I no longer despise those who, like our great poet-philosopher Santayana, set up a wall around their garden to shut off the disconsolate hills and the monstrous sea as well as the smoke and din of the market place."

Does someone object that the garden may be fascism's backyard (as it was with Santayana)? Well, who possesses certainty, and why bother about "the mere immediacy of the moment . . . the brute actualities of our existence"? We must confess, indeed, we must point out, that "life is baffling . . . we know little of the conditions of our own happiness and much less as to what will make others happy."

And this leads us to liberalism's fundamental tactic, "the belief in tolerance . . . give our enemies a chance . . . we are secure . . . our enemies cannot hurt us . . . [we are] interested first of all in the play of ideas . . . where a man can afford to care more for the rules of the game than for any particular result, he can be tolerant."

Wouldn't you come to my philosophic society's tea—you of Dachau and Warsaw, you of Madrid and Columbia, Tennessee? People of Java and India, of Africa and Greece, remember the rules of the game, build yourselves a wall, tend the mythical garden, lift your eyes to heaven, and look not upon the swollen bellies of your kids.

Professor Cohen told those who would listen, in 1919, the year of the great strikes, the intervention, the Red scare, the betrayal of the peace, that "the really important issue . . . is not economic or political but moral," and he sees fit to reprint this now. This is not a period when a man must take a stand, must say yes or no. One must not be a "fanatic" like Frederick Douglass and Vladimir Lenin; one must be tolerant of his enemies, for they cannot hurt you.

Follow me, all ye faithful: "the conception of the Kingdom of Heaven, destroying the importance of all particular material objects, frees us from the petty cares and vexations that absorb life's energies, and thus endows us with freedom to enjoy the universal fruits of the spirit." You do not understand? But that is precisely it: we "may fairly define liberalism as a rationalism that is rational enough to envisage the limitations of mere reasoning."

Embrace death with amazement in your eyes, like the American youngsters with mouth agape as the fascists' bayonets sought their guts at Kasserine Pass. Worry only about the rules of the game, and let the devil take us all.

HERBERT APTHEKER.

Sam Adams, Democrat

SAMUEL ADAMS: SELECTIONS FROM HIS WRITINGS, *Edited with an Introduction by Elizabeth Lawson. International.* \$1 cloth; \$0.35 paper.

AMERICA owes a great debt to Samuel Adams, a debt which has not yet been fully acknowledged. For the most part historians have glossed over his accomplishments or at best have sneered at them. To one of his biographers, Ralph V. Harlow, Adams "was probably a neurotic . . . an interesting 'case' for the psychoanalyst," while to another, John C. Miller, he was a "backstairs politician," the "keeper" of the trained mob of Boston.

The publication of this small booklet, containing the writings of Adams, edited with an introduction by Elizabeth Lawson, comes as a refreshing

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antidote to much that has been written on him. It goes a long way in placing in true perspective the contributions Adams made to the achievement of American independence and democracy. The writings have been arranged in three sections: "The Fight of the Colonies against Oppression"; "The American Revolution"; "Democracy and the New Nation." Within each section Miss Lawson has furnished suitable headings and supplied reference notes to give the reader the date, place and occasion of the citation. The text has been judiciously selected from among the more than 1800 printed pages of Adams' writings. To make for easier reading and to sustain interest, the editor has modernized the spelling and punctuation of the original documents and has omitted from the text repetitious and irrelevant material.

In addition to doing a thoroughly competent job in selecting and editing the most meaningful of Adams' writings, Miss Lawson has done much to create a better understanding of the role of this great leader of the artisan democracy. From her vigorously written introduction, Samuel Adams emerges not as a sordid and ambitious politician, but as a self-sacrificing and able man of the people—a true eighteenth-century bourgeois-democratic revolutionary.

Steeped in the philosophy of John Locke, Adams wrote and spoke in terms of the rights of man. But, to him, these rights were not limited to wealthy merchants; they belonged as well to the common laboring folk. He used the democratic ideology of his day to advocate American independence and, in the twilight of his life, to defend the French Revolution against the "nefarious" designs of "kings and nobles." A master propagandist, Adams was also an able organizer—possibly the ablest the American Revolution produced. Builder of the Sons of Liberty, founder of the Boston Committee of Correspondence, and organizer of the Democratic-Republican forces of Massachusetts, he "moved among the masses . . . and moved the masses." Both his agitational and organizational work had one goal—the establishment of a democratic state.

As the acknowledged head of Boston's mechanics, artisans and day laborers, he was the first of our great popular leaders to organize the masses to take over control of the state machinery. Only once did he fail the cause of democracy, and that was at

the time of Shays' Rebellion. Miss Lawson's explanation for Adams' failure to aid the democratic forces on this occasion is interesting and on the whole plausible.

Outside of this one lapse, Samuel Adams ended his career as he began it—anti-Tory and pro-democratic. For this he was held in the utmost contempt by the wealthy merchants of his day who went out of their way to vilify him. How different was the reaction of Thomas Jefferson, who wrote the following to Adams in 1801: "I have often asked myself, is this exactly in the spirit of the patriarch Samuel Adams? Will he approve of it? When I have been told that you were avoided, insulted, frowned on, I could not but ejaculate, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!'"

It is to be hoped that the publication of this volume will stimulate a greater interest in the life and work of this much neglected figure in American history.

HERBERT M. MORAIS.

The Negro Fought Back

ESSAYS IN THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN NEGRO, by Herbert Aptheker. International. \$2.

THERE is a finality about Herbert Aptheker's writings in the field of Negro history that is all to the good. After the false light which has been thrown on the subject, or the hiatus of partial truths, one sees very clearly the impetus which the Negro has brought to American life and for which he has never received sufficient credit. And these essays, though written and published first as separate pieces, have a continuity that highlights our progressive struggle in the United States in a way which is wholly lacking in most of our historians.

The opening essay, on Negro slave revolts in America, should be widely read, for it clearly exposes the main fallacy in the Southern legend—that the Negro was happy and contented in servitude. Mr. Aptheker has written a whole book on these same revolts and it is the best reference book this reviewer knows on how the truth may be distorted, or ignored, by those who have the power to change the thinking of an entire nation. This essay, approximately seventy pages long, is an admirable condensation of that book, yet one with enough vitality to stand by itself.

The role of the Negro in the Ameri-

can Revolution, apart from such names as Crispus Attucks and Salem Poor, is a closed chapter in most history texts, save for the work of those Negro historians, plus a handful of whites, who have so long fought to make the truth known. But even to the store of known facts Aptheker has added, digging deeply to show the extent to which the paradoxical existence of slavery during a war for freedom slowed the eventual victory.

The importance of Negroes in the abolition movement and the Civil War is perhaps better known—scattered evidences of it have appeared in many sources—but again Aptheker has performed the valuable service of synthesis.

In toto, this volume forms concrete evidence of a great struggle for freedom waged against great odds. For those whites who have tried to exclude Negroes from a place in our history it is a telling refutation of the nonsense so prevalent in our mores; to those Negroes who have shunned their own past because it seemed an inglorious background of slavery, a reading of these essays must surely show that past to be one of the most exciting and glorious struggles in our history.

BUCKLIN MOON.

Whose Radio?

RADIO'S SECOND CHANCE, by Charles A. Siepmann. Little, Brown. \$2.50.

A FEW years ago, the Federal Radio Commission released its annual report, which said, in part: "Broadcasting stations are licensed to serve the public and not for the purpose of furthering the private or selfish interests of individuals or groups of individuals." Despite these fine-sounding statements, radio has increasingly revealed a public-be-damned attitude. In 1927, the sale of air time amounted to \$5,000,000. By 1943, the sales brought in \$307,000,000 and the figure has increased since then. That same year, the net income of the National Broadcasting Company amounted to a return of 190 percent of its investment. The Columbia Broadcasting System's return was 158 percent of its investment. For public benefit?

Let's look at some more of the record. In 1944, more than one-half of the gross billings of all networks was paid by two types of national advertising business: drugs and toilet articles, 27.9 percent; foods and food bever-

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ages, 22.4 percent. This means that more than one-half the time sold on the four networks was controlled by these industries. How do these big industries and their representatives feel about the responsibility of controlling this giant *entertainment* medium? Thanks to Mr. Siepmann, we have only to look at the record. The head of one of the largest advertising agencies says: "The best radio program is the one that sells the most goods, not necessarily the one that holds the highest . . . rating." And the president of the American Tobacco Company has stated: "Taking 100 percent as the total radio value, we give ninety percent to commercials, to what's said for the product, and we give ten percent to the show. . . . I don't have the right to spend the stockholders' money just to entertain the public."

"Broadcasting stations are licensed to serve the public. . . ." So far, we've seen the financial and entertainment sides of the picture. Now let's look at the educational side. Sgt. Ben Kuroki came back to America from twenty-nine combat flights in Europe and a Los Angeles radio station cancelled a broadcast in which he was to take part on the grounds that the appearance of a Japanese-American would raise a "controversial issue." Three years ago, Cecil Brown's commentating contract was cancelled because he advised his listeners to see the movie based on the book *Mission to Moscow*. Last year, the contract of Johannes Steel was cancelled because of alleged pressure by America First groups who had threatened to boycott the product. Until the middle of 1945, the code of the National Association of Broadcasters specifically barred labor from sponsoring a broadcast. Earlier, Mark Woods, then president of the Blue Network, testified before the Federal Communications Commission that his network would not sell time to a labor union under any circumstances. Yet the National Association of Manufacturers had been on the air for years with a "carefully conceived program of public information." And these programs had been given *free* time by the networks. And so the list goes on, a list too great to enumerate here.

This book represents the most complete coverage of the story of radio, from soap operas to the F.C.C. and the future of FM broadcasting, that I have seen. On every page there are

facts which you should know, although Mr. Siepmann's conclusions may often be dismissed. For example, in the preface he is careful to assure his readers that he is firmly for the continuance of our "free enterprise" system and constantly reiterates his desire to better radio conditions in order to insure the existence of our democratic government. It is not difficult to see that by "democratic" Mr. Siepmann means capitalist government. There is nothing in his solutions which could not work just as well for a fascist government, since his interests lie more in keeping the radio listeners content than in making radio an instrument of the people. Throughout, however, one fact becomes more and more evident—radio is a tremendous social weapon which is now almost entirely in the hands of big business. The people of America must be organized to fight the imperialistic monopoly of the air which acts on a principle that listeners will "take what we give them and like it." That noise you hear back of the commercial is not static; it is the ghost voice of an Austrian house painter.

KEN CROSSEN.

Splitting Atoms

WHY SMASH ATOMS, by Arthur K. Solomon.
Harvard University Press. \$3.

THIS book appeared originally in 1940 and has been reissued because of the widespread interest in atomic power. Dr. Solomon is a research fellow in physics and chemistry at Harvard University and a staff member of the Radiation Laboratory of MIT.

The scientist-author explains atom-smashing, the work of the cyclotron, and even the means used to separate radioactive uranium and plutonium. Dr. Solomon offers clear and simple diagrams on gaseous diffusion and electro-magnetic separation of these fissionable materials.

Secret? Not at all. The same material appeared in the official War Department's manual *Atomic Energy for Military Purposes* by Henry D. Smyth. The Army tried to suppress a recent scientific paper on the medical effects of radio-activity. Dr. Solomon has a whole chapter devoted to this subject. There must be something wrong with this book, according to General Groves' pronouncements. The author has the temerity to call for "free, unhampered research."

JAMES KNIGHT.

sights and sounds



ART AND THE WAR

How did the war affect the artists? A review of three shows of veterans and French masters.

By WILLIAM THOR BURGER

CIVILIANS and art critics frequently speak in a vague, romantic way of the effect of war on art. They flock to exhibitions of war reportage, of veterans' art and of works from war areas in anticipation of undreamed truths and horrors, beauties and terrors. They are invariably disappointed.

This romanticism is compounded of the illusion of the receding front and the illusion of technology. The receding front is that point at which the unendurable and unimaginable terror of war suddenly supercedes day-to-day life and so molds and changes a person that he bears the marks of having "lived through it." It is the illusion civilians have of the life of soldiers, that soldiers in the states had of soldiers overseas, that the rear had for the front, that regimental runners had for the point of the platoon. The technological illusion is the one we get from the papers, where hardly a day passes but some scientist reports the war-born invention of a new technique to cure corns, to build houses ten times faster than before, or blow them ten times higher. Somehow, it is felt, the war must have given birth to similar advances in art.

The art of participants in the recent war is beginning to appear. Aside from the wartime reporting of *Life*, and the OWI posters, there have been many exhibitions. Recently on were those of the Downtown Gallery welcoming back six established artists who were soldiers, and the series of exhibits of the Tribune Book Shop which has just ended its seventh show of GI work and has begun one of drawings by merchant seamen. Works of great contemporary Frenchmen under the occupation and

the liberation are on view at the Matisse Gallery through June 8.

The effect of war on art and the effectiveness of war art can be seen in miniature in these shows. Either as art or as war documents the pictures are of interest insofar as the artist has reacted to the world around him in a form consonant with his subject matter.

The show at the Matisse gallery is the most disillusioning. It was somehow felt that the impact of the blitz, the Nazis and the Liberation would penetrate the individual worlds of the great French masters. Although some of the Rouaults, the Bonnard and the Picasso are probably pre-war, Matisse, Marchant and Dubuffet have recent enough works to indicate that the war had little esthetic effect on the followers of modern French style. The Matisse "Michaela" and the "Roses de Noel" are as fine in color as Matisse ever was. Jean Dubuffet has combined the style of Paul Klee and children's art to form bright ingenuous patterns in the normal manner of the School of Paris. Although the paintings are no worse than before, they now seem lacking. In terms of the time in which they were done they seem less like art produced in serene isolation than like handicraft products. Just as a shoemaker turns out shoes during a war, so Matisse turns out Matisses, a standard item with a steady market.

The work of art has become a commodity whose value lies only in itself. It is no longer a means of communication but an object, mute, beautiful, and now very dull. It was of course in the nature of the Fauve and Cubist styles, concerned with the abstract values of color and form, to be unconcerned

with the world about. That they remained so is surprising only because it was thought that the overwhelming nature of events would force a change. Picasso, indeed, has joined the Communist Party, but no works have yet come to the United States to demonstrate the movement of his personal style.

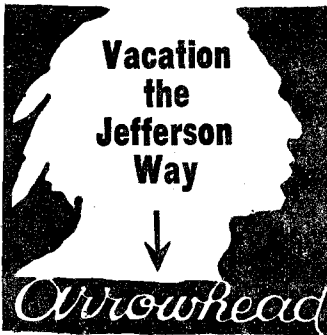
Nor, when we examine the wartime lives of the European masters, of Beckmann, Fini, Morandi or Matisse, can we point to an overpowering influence of war. These painters took refuge in villas by the Mediterranean and lived quietly in their studios surrounded by flowers, family and models. Their personal reaction to the war was to withdraw from it as far as possible, just as stylistically they had withdrawn from the world all their lives.

THE artists at the Downtown Gallery had the war thrust on them. Siporin and Levine were initially assigned by Congress to paint the war. The others, in the Army, found time to paint and were even encouraged to do so. They were, after all, men of reputation whom a publicity-minded and luxuriously overstaffed Army was not averse to using. The Negro artist, Jacob Lawrence, worked for the Coast Guard. Mike Siporin was detailed for duty with the Fifth Army in Italy and saw the whole Italian campaign. Jack Levine, in a typical snafu, was sent to cover the war on an abandoned volcano in the South Atlantic.

None of them, it is true, were combat soldiers. Insofar as they functioned as artists in the Army their position was similar to that of an artist working in a Fourteenth Street studio. Studio conditions were worse, but chow was better. War stories were second-hand rather than third- or fourth-hand, and the actual participants were available as models. On the other hand, the Army made more demands on time than civilian life. In short, the sum of their Army experience was to provide them with a certain amount of experience embodied in sketch notes available for future reference.

The Downtown Show displayed the result of this experience. Jack Levine, stationed on a bare rock whose only visitors were airborne VIPs, found little to draw and less time to draw it in. He developed, understandably, a consuming contempt for the petty indignities and disciplines of the brass. His "Welcome Home," a sort of military "Feast of Pure Reason," is a

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reaction in terms of his hatred for pompous Rotarian generals and Chamber of Commerce colonels, to the country he found on his return. In a very healthy way it is not a memory of the past constructed in a studio, but an immediate picture painted at the first opportunity Levine has had for serious work in years. As painting it is in many ways not up to his earlier work in mordancy of color, excitement of drawing or richness of paint, which is exactly what should be expected after so long an idleness. What is missing in terms of paint is, however, present in emotional intensity. His technique can easily be recaptured, as long as Levine stays in the strong currents that bind him to the world.

Siporin's work has been most affected by the war. An artist whose "Haymarket" series exerted a deep influence in the 1930's, Siporin seemed for some years to have fallen into a personal mannerism involving stock figure distortions, and standard left-wing subject matter. His great ability seemed smothered in formal concerns. He saw and drew much of the war in Italy, the Partisans, the poverty and the Gothic Line.

His four pieces in the show were a marked improvement both in content and in form, but the two roads of development do not arrive at the same place. On the one hand, Siporin's color has lost much of its rawness* and has become rich and considered. The figures are the same mannequins as before, but they are composed in a more coherent fashion. On the other hand, the soldiers of "Winter Scene" live like real GI's at a particular moment of history, and the Partisans of "Fiesta in Tuscany" are not abstract guerillas, but Italians in the city of Siena. Siporin wants us to know about the suffering and heroism of real people seen against the background of history. But form and content do not quite join. Passages in the painting are concerned with formal beauty, when in content they describe actual ugliness and discomfort. The Partisans in Piazza Loreto, spitting at the corpse of Mussolini, form a delightfully intricate compositional mass, but in so doing lose their identity as victims and avengers of fascism, who are people even as you and I.

Crawford and Lewandowski have taken the tools of war's disorder and arranged them in a new, a painter's order. These two are part of the pre-

sent wave of abstraction which parallels a similar trend after the last war. To create order, at least in the miniature world of a painting, to believe that this order is based on eternal and superhuman laws of composition, has been attractive to many painters in recent years. It seems to me that such works fail because at best they are merely beautiful. At worst, for those of us who refuse to recognize immutable laws of form, they are not even beautiful, but only boring. The artist in his studio making an order of the visual elements of ships and airplanes not only fails to tell of the tools and their functions, but in avoiding the human war cuts himself off from the mainstream of human interest.

Even as gifted a painter as Guglielmi has found it necessary to impose abstract patterns on what is otherwise a picture of the soldier's dream of a waiting woman. In Guglielmi's case the abstract elements are not even integrated into the body of the painting, but put on like wallpaper on buildings and streets.

Jacob Lawrence has wasted no time in changing from military genre to daily life. Recording the life of Negroes in the Coast Guard during the war, he continues to paint them as a civilian. It is, as always, honest and pleasant art.

SINCE V-J Day the Subway Art Gallery at the Tribune Book Shop has given almost fifty ex-GI's a chance to exhibit their work. Interrupted in their careers, or too young to have had much time to develop, the GIs at the Tribune Shop have little to offer yet except their sincerity. For them as artists the war was a loss of time that will be hard for them to make up. It is in the work that they and hundreds like them failed to produce that war has most hindered art. Incoherent and intense, a few stand out as promising, notably Carmen D'Avino, Nicola Maltese and Russ Hoban.

It is clear that the net effect of the war on art has been retrogressive. Most artists, isolated as civilians, continued or reinforced their isolation during the war. Fleeing the unpleasantness of civilian life, they were less able to face the more direct questions of war. Those artists who were preoccupied with formal question before the war became even more abstract during it. Even those who tried to keep in touch with the world generally suc-

ceeded only in changing the uniforms and occupations of the actors in their paintings. They rarely touched their inherent content or their style. The actual conditions of the war hampered the artist at every turn. In contrast to technical fields where the weight of society supported new work and spread it, the artist was left to shift for himself.

It is not difficult to understand why, neglected by society, he in turn absolved himself of responsibility towards society.

In those cases where the artist assumed responsibility the work took on exceptional interest. The other works which seemed good enough before now appear to be markedly lacking in terms of the demands one would like to make on art.

On Broadway

Two masterpieces made a long but exciting evening of the fourth and final production in Old Vic's New York season. One was Sophocles' tragedy, *King Oedipus*, in the Yeats translation. The other was Sheridan's satirical comedy, *The Critic*. No two productions could be completer contrasts and, therefore, could better exhibit the versatility and resources of the company.

The *Oedipus* was so impressive as to awe the audience. The magnificent settings were dominated by images of gods molded in the style of the Greek primitives, not in the more realistic and personable shapes of the more skeptical Periclean time. This was a brilliant stroke, for it helped to emphasize the primitive concepts of human fate that are at the core of the tragedy. The acting combined a stately and almost ritual quality in the public scenes, such as the address of Oedipus to the suppliants and the pronouncement of the Delphic oracle, and the vivid portrayal of personal emotion such as the scenes between Oedipus and his wife and children and with Creon, who is to succeed to the throne when Oedipus steps down. Seldom has such convincing tragic acting been seen on our stage.

The Critic was so opposite in mood that many found it rather shocking. Many of the comments seemed to assume that there was something wrong in enjoying so gay and airy a comedy after the tragic grandeur of the *Oedipus*. This, it seems to me, is a psychological handicap that the program

makers of the Old Vic might take into consideration.

To me *The Critic* was a delight. Its clever writing is so exquisitely turned as to be a continuous pleasure to the ear and to the mind. The writing is a charming combination of satire, broad to the point of farce in its main outlines, but as exquisitely worked as lace in its texture. It was played with keen realization of the points to be made in the dialogue and a buffoonery in the rehearsal scene, which is half the play, that never descended to the boorish. In the effective stylization of the slapstick the stumblings have grace, along with hilarity.

To return to the *Oedipus*, I am left with a question that here I can only touch upon. Magnificent as was the production, my response was reluctant and complicated. I had expected to be moved by great poetry. I found myself being more moved by something that, when I tried to understand it, seemed to me more like the horrified compulsions one feels at a film of a primitive ceremonial.

Rationalize it as one will, adorn it with whatever symbols, the reality persists that the pattern of human behavior solemnized in *Oedipus*, the idea of irrational Fate and submission to its dictates, is primitive. The response that I felt in myself and sensed in the comments and exclamations around me were not what I have felt when there has been a true emotional rapport between an audience and a work of art. There was surprise, there was discomfort and even fear, and a sort of anthropological interest.

This leads me to suspect that something in the ancient Greek classics is no longer truly communicable to us. This is no new phenomenon. The classic literature of the ancient Egyptians and Babylonians are unreadable by us. They have become historical, anthropological and philological data, but are no longer living literature. The same thing has happened in science. The once basic Ptolemaic astronomy and Aristotelian biology are now data for the history of science. It may be painful to acknowledge the mortality of the supposedly immortal but the world does move.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Music

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Write R. F. D. 1—E. MARGENAU
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public concert, staid old Town Hall
rang with splendid singing of anti-
fascist songs of many countries, mili-
tant labor and picketline songs, songs
of the people from the past. The
packed house responded with tremen-
dous enthusiasm. The high point of the
program was the group of anti-fascist
songs, and notable among them was
the electrifying Jewish "Smol Y'min"
—in complete contrast to the wailing
type of Jewish song usually considered
typical.

During the intermission the au-
dience participated in mass singing led
by Lee Hays and Peter Seeger. Prob-
ably that particular audience was well
aware of the need for wiping out the
Rankin Committee, and of the veter-
ans' homeless plight, but it is probably
also true that after singing "I'm Look-
in' For a Home" and "The Rankin
Tree" (which grew so big it shut out
the sun and poisoned everything
around) even that audience really
"felt" more strongly on the issues.

In the latter half of the program,
Charles Holland, a young Negro tenor
with a voice of beautiful quality, sang
a group of classical songs. The final
number was a new cantata, "We've
Come From the City," by Herbert
Haufrecht, here given its first per-
formance. Space limitations prevent
adequate comment on the work, except
to say: hats off to the composer for his
fruitful contribution to working-class
music.

The program was tied together
and annotated by a narrative script by
Louis Lerman and Louis Relin, read
by Martin Wolfson. It was a striking
departure from the usual scholarly pro-
gram notes, which are also usually un-
read. Sarah Marks at the piano gave
strong support to the chorus.

The Jefferson Chorus and its con-
ductor are to be warmly congratulated
for the splendid performance—of pro-
fessional caliber despite the difficulties
under which a workers' organization
functions—and for having pioneered in
the public concert field. The most im-
portant thing about this event is that it
is a living illustration of the fact that
music is wanted and needed and can be
organized for the people. Concrete dis-
cussion and planning to that end must
take place among musicians so that
music can fulfill its historic role in the
battle for progress. Singing is a form of
battle, and music is a weapon that must
be placed in the hands of the people.

HELEN COLLIS.

THE American-Soviet Music Society
opened what we hope will be a
long and healthy public life with a
concert of contemporary Soviet and
American chamber music. It was inter-
esting to notice what unity of mood
there was among the works coming
from our country and the Soviet
Union. Both groups adopted an ap-
proach to chamber music closer to the
useful eighteenth century ideal, of mu-
sicians coming together for a good
time, than the nineteenth century effort
to give even the smallest group of
instruments symphonic texture.

The major work performed was
the Shostakovich Trio in E Minor, Op.
67, written last year. It kept the audi-
ence dazzled by a continuous display
of magician's tricks. A rabbit came out
of the hat at the very opening, offering
a slow movement in fugue style, with
the muted violin taking the lower voice
while the cello took the upper voice,
playing throughout in piercing harmon-
ics. In turn came a stormy fast move-
ment, a typical Shostakovich scherzo, a
broad, singing slow movement, and a
very Russian finale that started with
the piano beating out a clangorous folk
dance while the violin and cello trans-
formed themselves temporarily into
balalaikas. The entire work was
an exhilarating experience, although
whether it has more profound elements
of emotion and design must be discov-
ered on further hearings.

A more modest composition was
the Shebalin Sonata for Violin and
Viola. It was very lyrically written for
these two instruments, its last move-
ment building up exciting sonorities that
made the two sound like four. The ex-
cellent performers were Vivian Rivkin,
Joseph Fuchs and Nicolai Graudan in
the trio, and Joseph and Lillian Fuchs
in the sonata.

The major American work was
Paul Bowles' sonata for two pianos,
performed with sizzling virtuosity by
Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale. Like
so many American works, its idiom
was something of a patchwork. The
first movement was a granite-like essay
in percussion and syncopation; the slow
movement was very tender and im-
pressionist, with a hint of popular piano
style; the finale sounded as if it might
have been written as a drum solo for
Gene Krupa or Zutty Singleton, and
then transcribed for piano. There is no
question here of the possibility of deeper
emotional values. These were obviously
absent, just as obviously present were a

thorough competence in handling musical materials, and an ability to write an attractive concert-piece. Muriel Smith sang four songs, of which the simple folkiness of Siegmeister's "Euclid" and the joking of Blitzstein's "Mamasha Goose" seemed to accomplish their purpose better than Blitzstein's more serious "DP" and Ned Rorem's "Doll's Boy." The program was completed with Virgil Thomson's kidding of Vienna in his "Synthetic Waltzes" and Norman Dello Joio's bow to Cuba with his "Rhumba," both again for two pianos. The Society, which invites new members, promises an interesting series of concerts for next season, and an equally interesting series of interchange both of music ideas and of performing artists between the United States and the Soviet Union.

THE last concert of the season by the National Orchestral Association was a welcome festival of new American works. The most important was a Requiem by Lazare Saminsky, written for full orchestra, chorus and soloists, and set partly to the traditional Latin text, partly to poetry in English. The composer makes no attempt to use the contrapuntal forms of the classic Mass, writing instead short melodic lines sung mostly in unison, and placed in a finely worked-out impressionist texture of harmony and orchestral timbre. It is an admirably written and moving work whose only limitation is its narrow emotional range. The audience found it a little difficult to take because, like his model Debussy, this composer makes his point and finishes when others have scarcely got through their introduction. The work deserves many hearings.

Everybody enjoyed Robert Ward's overture, "Jubilation," written while the composer was serving on Leyte and Okinawa. Its syncopated rhythms seemed to come less from a conscious attempt to marry jazz with symphonic music than from the fact that jazz is in the composer's blood, and he makes a most happy use of it. Ward is a man to watch.

George Kleinsinger's Fantasy for violin and orchestra leans heavily on the romantic concerto of men like Max Bruch and Glazounov. Kleinsinger handles the form earnestly and convincingly, but doesn't show enough originality of melodic line to make any lasting impressions.

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